

## SLEEPING BEAUTIES SMELL THE COFFEE

"University can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. If you work at it." The poster promoting Dalhousie should say "If you can pay for it."

Only a few years ago, this latter caveat did not seem of great consequence to me. I had a classic case of middle-class narrow thinking. Mom and Dad would not object to contributing a little more to my education. But not all students are as fortunate as I was to come from such a financially stable background. Nor are all students single and fresh-out-of high school. Many have to support families as well as themselves as they go through school.

Indeed, as I scrape together my wages and student loan to live and pay for school, the reality of others' circumstances strikes closer to home. I look around and wonder "What are we paying for?" Classes are overcrowded. Facilities are lacking. Entire programs are being cut. Last year, the tuition increased by over 25% and the quality of services we are receiving is only getting worse. Indeed, students are the ultimate easy-to-please consumers. Increase the price, lower the quality and the customers still keep coming back. Universities have a monopoly on 'higher education'. They control the pre-requisite for just about any livelihood these days.

"Many students, especially those who are poor intuitively know what the schools do for them," said Ivan Illich, a well-known critic of the education system. "They school them to confuse process and substance. The pupil is "schooled" to confuse grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence and fluency with the ability to say something new."

After sixteen years of institutionalized education, I followed up on my suspicion that university is not the only, let alone best, form of learning. A year-long romp about the Old World, in search of wisdom and (you guessed it) the meaning of life, introduced me to so many wise, well-read, contemplative people doing so many wonderful interesting things with their lives that I returned very much doubting the validity of ever returning to school, a place which seemed to narrow thinking not broaden it.

"It's hard to tell which is more exciting—what you'll learn about the world, or what you'll learn about yourself," the poster's text continues amid pretty photos of people around the Dalhousie campus. "At Dalhousie, we help you discover that you can't really have one without the other."

Wow. Dalhousie must be wonderful.

It reminds me of a Doonesbury cartoon I cut out as a frosh. It showed a lecturer addressing a group of graduates bemoaning the superficiality and banality of formal education. He ended with a command to remember only "sweet gauzy scenes" after he snapped his fingers. In the cartoon's final frame, onlookers come out of their trance, shake their heads and ask what happened.

"I don't know. I just remember sweet gauzy scenes."

Wake up. Ten thousand dollars later, you'll realize how outrageous the hypnotist's bill really is.

Miriam Korn

# Stop the snowball

The 348 students in history 1050 have their class in Dunn 117, a room which seats only 234.

43% of the economics classes described in the calendar are offered only some years.

Enrollment in 3rd and 4th year biology classes has increased by an average of 34% from last year.

As a Dalhousie student, can you identify with any of the above mentioned problems? These were some of the examples cited a year ago this month to demonstrate that quality of education at Dalhousie University, in spite of the increasing tuition every year, continues to deteriorate. The members of the Board of Governors acknowledged the existing shortfalls in quality and felt compelled to vote in favour of the 10% tuition increase so that improvements could be made. Unfortunately, their plan does not work—their logic does not hold. Even with a 37.5% increase in tuition over the last three years, the University does remain in an abyss of financial hardship. Tuition hikes are not the solution.

Over the last few months, the Dalhousie Student Union has continued its quality audit of the university and the decline of the course offerings remains to be the biggest

problem. In a survey done on enrollment in September, it was found that between 30–40% of the respondents were not registered for the desired number of courses. There were students who waited in line all through a dark night to get into a psychology class. Many commerce students not in the co-op programme are unable to take certain courses, because they are no longer offered during the regular session. Co-op stu-

*Can you identify with any of the above problems?*

dents are basically left on their own to find a job for their work term. These are only some of the problems regarding quality education faced by students this year.

In a report from the Senate Financial Planning Committee last summer, programme reductions and increased tuition were among the recommendations. While anonymous donations to the tune of a

million dollars have gone towards offices in what used to be a library, students are faced with a trilemma: increased tuition, program cuts, faculty complement reduction. A Senate Academic Review Committee, created over the summer, has the mandate to prioritize programmes in preparations for reductions. Surely in a university of Dalhousie's capacity, direct academic units ought not to be the first to stand on trial.

Of course, there also remains a tendency to separate the issues of quality and accessibility. Economists, even at the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, have agreed that tuition impedes accessibility of education. This has profound effects on the socio-economic mix of students. Certainly, the presence of students from a broad range of backgrounds is a quality issue. There is no improvements in quality of academic programmes while an integral and increasing fraction of the student body is becoming marginalized. This is not just a once-for-all 10% hike. Hikes are cumulative—a snowball effect. JANUARY 1993 IS NOT TIME 0. EDUCATION IS A RIGHT—FIGHT BACK!

Mausumi Banerjee



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

### The Right wants might

To the editor:

Right wing politicians have whipped up demands for military intervention in Bosnia (—and most unfortunately are supported in this by a number of people traditionally on the Left).

Months ago Mulroney asserted that force was necessary to stop the bloodshed and suffering, as did US President-elect Bill Clinton. Britain's Prime Minister John Major and Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl likewise champion the use of military force. Further war cries issue from the likes of Margaret Thatcher, Germany's Tory Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, and "our very own" External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall.

They all claim force can stop the war.

The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is certainly desperate. The sieges go unbroken, the atrocities continue and winter tightens its grip. Two million Serb, Croat and Muslim refugees await proper shelter.

Everyone wants the war over. But Western intervention is not the answer. It would necessarily mean US planes and Canadian troops taking one side against the other. In practice they would go to war against the Serbs. Under the flag of

the United Nations they would fight alongside Croats who have themselves committed atrocities (—like the setting up of detention camps) and seized a third of Bosnia.

The likes of Brian Mulroney have no sympathy for the victims of the war, any more than they cared for those slaughtered in the Gulf. They care only for their own positions. It would be a terrible mistake to back their use of force.

What would Western military intervention mean? To enforce a "no fly zone" US, British or Canadian planes would have to bomb and strafe Serbs throughout the region. US Secretary of State Eagleburger admits as much by conceding the aid effort would be suspended and aid workers withdrawn in order to do ahead with this. We know from the Gulf War what could happen—though nothing in Bosnia so far has equalled the horror of the February 1991 massacre on the Basra Road.

If Western forces attempt to drive Serbs out of certain areas they would be practising their own version of "ethnic cleansing", for Serbs have lived in Bosnia for years. Many have fallen for the lies of unscrupulous politicians, but it is their genuine fears for the future which have allowed them to be used in the killings. They would undoubtedly resist Western forces.

The war would not end, but take on a new character like Russia's war in

Afghanistan—with well armed Western troops and aircraft pitched against an entrenched local population.

We are witnessing moves in a grotesque politicians' game:

- Serbia's Milosevic led the way, but he was supported by the West up to the middle of last year.

- Croatia's President Tudjman agreed to partition Bosnia with Milosevic long before the war began.

- The European Community's sanction of this carve-up and its own demand for the "cantonization" of Bosnia according to ethnic groups encouraged the barbarity of "ethnic cleansing".

- Now Milosevic's and Tudjman's respective puppets in Bosnia are suing for peace because the partition is almost complete.

- Eagleburger and the UN negotiators merely want to contain the war, freeze the boundaries and stem the flow of refugees. (That the UN is not there to help the victims of war was highlighted recently in a New York Times story which reported UN forces in Croatia, acting under orders of Tudjman, forcing Muslim refugees from Bosnia to return back across the border.)

Horror at what is happening leads

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