

Slate Attacked

The Gazette felt it was necessary to allow the principals referred to in the following statement to be given the right of reply. The original comment, then, and the reply are printed here together.

To the Gazette:

With the Dalhousie Student Elections approaching, it appears that Dalhousie has entered into a new phase of politics. The entry of a team lead by John D'Orsay into the Presidential race brings to Dalhousie a background of power politics that has not been seen in our time.

The D'Orsay team is building quite an organization at Dal. They have attempted to run a candidate for their team in each of the faculty representative positions. They have held several organizational meetings and are spending considerable effort on their election bid. Rumors have reached our ears of several of the proposals that they have considered their concern. We have heard stories of co-operative housing ideas, unionization of the teaching staff, and exclusion of those people under nineteen from alcoholic events. They plan to run certain non-alcoholic events. I (Keith Evans - Howe Hall Rep) presented a petition to the present council against such a policy and as a result, a separate liquor room is used at alcohol accompanied

events, solving our problem. This solution appears threatened. However, these are rumors and we await concrete election issues.

The main problem that concerns us is the idea of power politics itself. Will Dalhousie benefit from such an organization or will Council be reduced to a majority government by a hand-picked slate of councillors of the executive. If they succeed in their bid, we can see the possibility that Council will be ruled by an elitist group that has preformulated policies and presents them for automatic approval. To us, Council must be independent of the executive. Since many councillors do not stand for re-election, the only way we can maintain a responsible government is to retain the independence of the councillors.

We can foresee a majority government next year in Council. Committees could be filled with "government" supporters and exclude any independent councillors elected. Dal would lose the worthwhile contributions of such able persons. The "slate" concept could definitely lead to such an outcome.

But, of course, the final decision is up to you the voter. Yours will be the final and binding choice.

Keith Evans
Garth Nathanson

Slate Responds

To the Gazette:

We will permit messieurs Evans and Nathanson to escape substantive correction on their final objection since it was based on rumour, which will be dispelled by publication of our platform in the pamphlet "Issues for Your Union".

The principle thrust of their argument was speculation upon the possible consequences of the emergence of "slate" politics at Dalhousie. Suggesting that there is a dichotomy to be drawn in which "slates" did differ fundamentally from "independents" in their relation to the process of policy formation is to misrepresent reality.

It is our observation that under the existing framework the initiative for policy formation comes from the executive which is neither assisted nor visibly impeded by the legislators (council) in the exercising of this power. A salient example is the axing of the Course Evaluation Programme, probably the most important academic service provided by the union for its members, with a council committee formed only as an afterthought.

We attribute the unspectacular performance of student governments to the lack of emphasis on issues in the selection of candidates in typical elections for legislative positions. Our response has been to organize a group of individuals to

discuss and reach agreement on a minimal set of priorities which we feel can only be acted upon by collective initiative from the outset. This should overcome the principal stumbling block to effective student government: the lack of human resources to implement creative and effective programmes which have the potential to satisfy the felt needs of students.

Past achievements have required the charismatic inspiration of individuals, the limited returns of this approach have often resulted in the frustration and disaffection of union members. As an alternative to the "messiah" approach we have sought the assistance of people we know to be concerned, able and motivated; who would not normally enter student government because of the lack of opportunity to take an active part in the process of real policy formation. We are asking students to support our candidates on the basis of their approach to real issues; and, thus we cannot possibly see this as being construed in any way as a form of elitism (as they have alleged).

It is our view that by proposing a selection of "preformulated policies" to the electorate we are providing a real opportunity for democratic participation on the part of all students. We are offering the student body a plan of action for their union rather than the "image" politics" which Dalhousie has suffered under in the past.

The strongest bond uniting our group is the desire to see issues become the basis of a new awakening of student political concern not as messieurs Evans and Nathanson would have it - a thirst for mere formal power. Our approach provides the basis for obtaining the greatest contribution and participation from those able persons elected by student voters. The exclusion of any able person from the work of council's committees is an act of irresponsibility totally inconsistent with our fundamental intent.

Finally we propose that power is, after all, merely the precondition for effective action and as such is a legitimate aim of political activity. The students of Dalhousie will surely benefit from our approach, just as they have surely suffered as a result of the non-decisions which have resulted from the inability of previous administrations to develop an appropriate relationship with their councils.

Yours,
Bernie MacDonell
John D'Orsay
Dave Brown

Comment

Move over black man

Have I had enough! Just marched home, indignant, from the Heidelberg lounge. I have been treated as a sex object again! A straight guy asks me to dance, macho man. On the floor bump and grind waltz. Interrogation: why did I hesitate to dance with him?; black is not the plague, it won't rub off. What to do, get defensive about being with and having been part of history by my white being, a past which has discriminated against black people? I am sorry that the past was like that but I am **Now**. I carry an unreasonable guilt for nothing that I have done. Me, and how many others, have consistently overcompensated in this guilt of race, reacting oversensitively to personal interactions, not to offend, not wanting to be affronted by racism and discrimination. How many times have I felt this way and reacted like this? Bearing the guilt for my racist family...

But wait! No more, I've had enough of this weighing on my

shoulders, feeling responsible for everyone and everything. I can't do it - I am a person, white by birth (can I help that?) and I am a woman!

Tonight I was subjected to the verbal fantasies of sex, intended for me. The black man summons me to his table and I comply obediently (why?), partly out of curiosity and partly because of my moralistic guilt, not to offend. What follows is typical male macho, the offer of a performing thing, so long and so wide...the persuasion that somehow I will feel complete when he gets his rocks off (I am his instrument of pleasure?) The conversation never gets past this point...

But black man, you listen to me for once! I am a woman! White, but woman! So your struggle is racial, well mine is sexual. More women in the world than men, yet we are still a minority status. And you dare to lay on me a sexual trip, the way I am supposed to compensate for the racist wrongs which you have been


forced to endure... like I have to give a little of myself. My body.

Well, what about us, brothers? Us women, you know, the people who you keep down as much as white men do. (Maybe you do more, conforming to historical roles). Now you have found something in common with white man - both of you oppress women! Congratulations. Here I am telling you that you need liberation, but it's a different kind and the same thing too. You think of liberation and the Black Panthers come to mind. Mine is women's liberation. But there is the hope for a full human liberation where everyone can just be a person, no roles, no racism, no sexism.

So you talk about slavery. Well just remember that YOUR liberation, YOUR right to vote did not include BLACK WOMEN. Black women never got liberated, along with white women. Yet you persist in forcing submission, oppression on me. You, playing black stud!

THE SUBMARINE

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