

Struggling for legitimate leadership

Desperation can make you do desperate things and desperate is the only word that could describe the antics of your student union during the elections just held. When the newly-formed Action Committee launched a "no" campaign, the actions of the DSU's current and in-

coming executive were nothing short of disgraceful! Our conclusions would suggest that what is really needed on the Dal campus is a sincere analysis of the problems currently facing students and a determination to actively fight for student rights. Also, we believe that the tenuous mandate of the student union relies on and fosters student apathy, effectively disenfranchising students of a stake in their student union. This was most clearly demonstrated by the disgusting manner in which the EXECU-

TIVE acted toward a student committee determined to oppose the unchallenged candidacy for president and vice-president. To give you an idea of the type of shenanigans the DSU was up to, try these on for size: How about scare tactics? When it was clear that we were continuing with our plans for a "no" campaign, they sent us a letter stating that what we were doing was illegal and that we would be fined at least \$75 for each poster that we put up. There was nothing in the DSU constitution

that said that we couldn't run a "no" campaign, so they felt that they needed to scare us. Well that didn't work, so what's next? How about influencing various people so that we couldn't get our message across? While some of us were leafleting students in the SUB the general manager kicked us out! The reason? Accompanied by the assistant to the Elections Returning Officer (Chris), the general manager insisted that we had to leave because we may be violating election rules. When asked if we were actually violating any rules, he couldn't answer! Smells fishy, huh? How about this, Office Services wouldn't print any material for us that had the word "no" on it! They insisted that we had to get the O.K. from the E.R.O. (Wade) All on the pretext that we may be violating some rule that doesn't even exist!

But let's get to the heart of the matter. Fewer than 1600 votes were cast in this past election and 27% of these voted against the list of candidates. It is the case that fewer than 15% of students bothered to vote and that, my friends, is the way they like it to be. When the Action Committee actively campaigned on a series of issues (daycare, tuition freeze,

fighting racism, sexism and homophobia on campus, etc) this undermined the entire basis of the way the student union was run. The legitimacy of a system that relies exclusively on student apathy was called into question.

There is a growing number of students who are fed-up with the way that their representatives are dealing with the serious issue of tuition increases. We need to continue the fight in new and innovative ways. Never in history has anything been won without a struggle: and struggle we will.

THE D.S.U. HAS LOST ALL LEGITIMACY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR A TUITION-FREEZE. A couple of weeks before the last tuition-freeze rally (Jan. 21), the executive of the DSU tabled a motion to discontinue the Freeze the Fees campaign in favour of "quality management"! The newly-elected pres and v.p. believe that there is such thing as a "reasonable" increase in tuition. This is the same mentality that believes in "reasonable" cutbacks to social services and people's wages.

We know that there are many students out there who feel the same way we do. This is not a time to feel powerless or alone! Students are beginning to speak with a louder voice, but we can't do it alone.

M. Spector

The Action Committee

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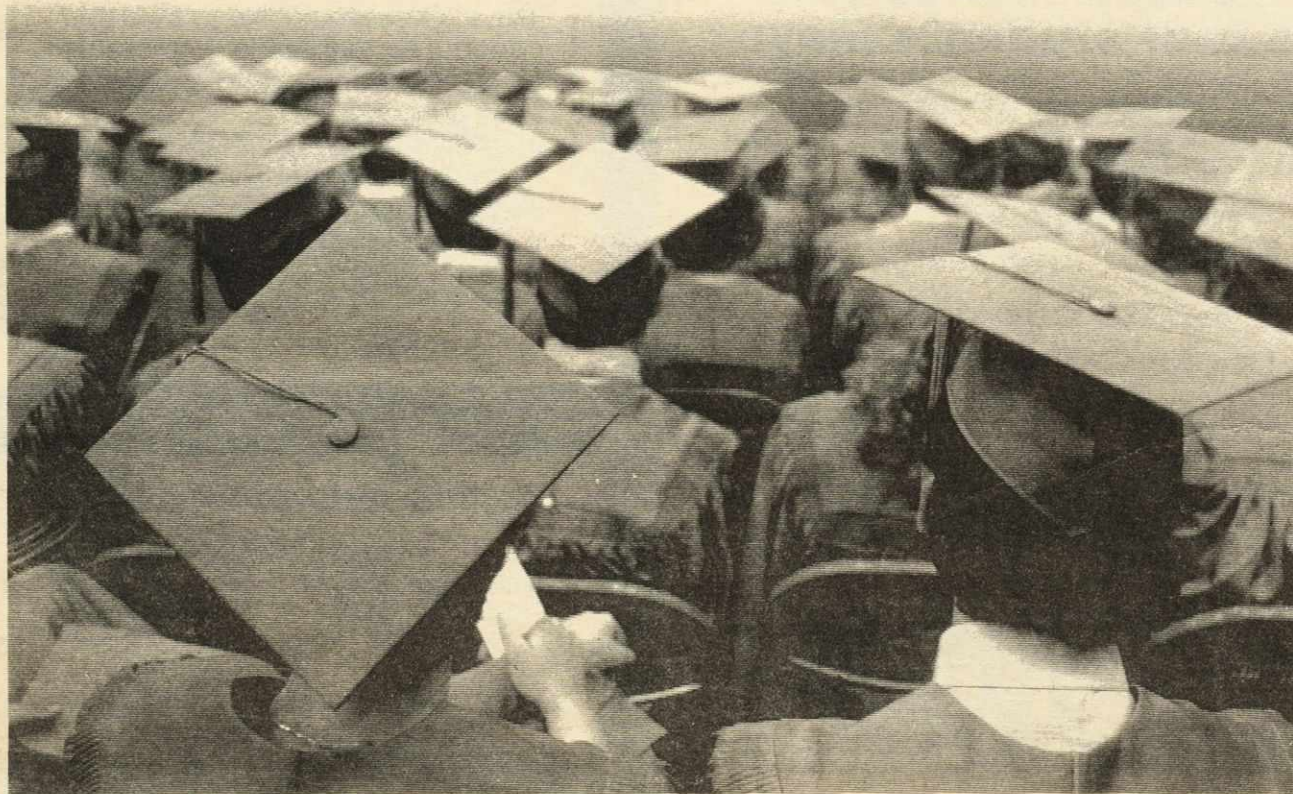
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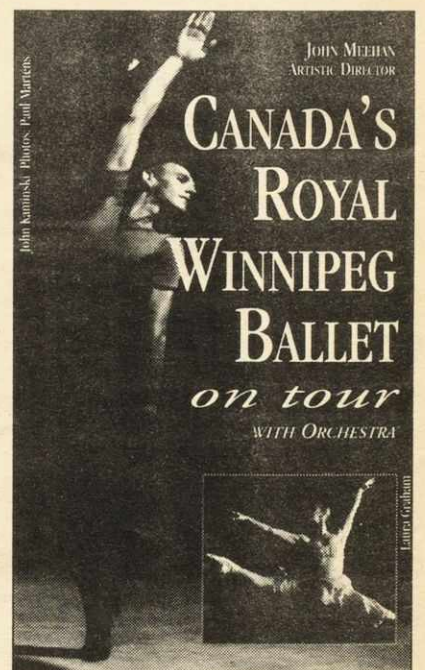
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