

# Illusion of Glasnost

by Ken Bosman

"When the Soviets want something from the West, they trade Jews," charges Natasha Beckman, herself released just three months ago from a Soviet prison.

Speaking to a crowd of about forty at a Thursday forum sponsored by the Hillel Network, Beckman outlined the plight of Soviet Jews. "In the Soviet Union there is a tradition of anti-Semitism. You cannot change it without changing the nature of the whole society," she said.

Beckman was also critical of glasnost, the new official Soviet policy of openness and self-criticism. "Where is the glasnost when 400,000 Jews want to emigrate?" she asked.

"In the West you are easy to satisfy. The Soviets release a few thousand Jews, or a few famous 'refuseniks' Jews, and they're allowed to emigrate and the West is deceived," said Beckman. "When the Soviets want an arms treaty, or high technology, or trade, they open up a trickle of Jews...but when they don't get what they want they slam the door shut again."

Beckman also noted the historical trends in Jewish emigration. "In 1979, when the Soviets wanted SALT II (a strategic arms treaty), 55,000 Jews were allowed to leave. In 1980 (after SALT II was rejected by the United States), almost none were let out."

Anti-Semitism is everywhere in the Soviet Union, according to Beckman. "On your internal passport everybody's nationality is listed...from age 16 you are labeled as a Jew."

Being Jewish also affects daily life. "On the job it is difficult to be a refusenik. You will be denied the very best jobs, access to the best school," said Beckman. "Sometimes you are even fired...but every body

must work in the Soviet Union. If you do not work they throw you in jail for being a parasite."

"In education they always have one or two Jews, for the statistics. But the reality is that here too there is anti-Semitism. In Moscow University to get into physics they have a special entrance exam for Jews. It is four or five times harder (than the exam for non-Jews)."

Religious freedom is also non-existent, according to Beckman. "From age five a child is told not to tell anybody he is a Jew. We have Hebrew school in secret in the home, with the drapes closed and the telephone disconnected," said Beckman. "But when the KGB (the Soviet internal security force)

knocks on the door we must hurry and take the Jewish flags off the walls and answer."

When questioned as to how the West can help Jews in the Soviet Union, Beckman suggested, "Adopt a family, write them letters let them know the West cares. The family may not get the letter, because all foreign mail is censored but at least the KGB will, and that's almost as good."

Beckman also cautioned the West not to be too eager to make deals with the Soviets in order to get Jews allowed to emigrate. "If you compromise with the Soviets, then you compromise your own freedom," she said.

Beckman and her husband are on a North American tour to publicize their views and experiences as Jews in the USSR.

# Student loan from stranger

**MONTREAL (CUP)**—A Concordia University student had to borrow \$100 from a stranger last month when her student loan was delayed by more than ten days.

The student, a single parent with two children, was denied an emergency loan from Concordia's financial aid office. She was told instead to go to the Women's Studies Department or the campus chaplain.

"The secretary told me 'we can't do anything, go see the chaplain,'" Beverly Lee said. "Well, he was very nice but he had no money."

Lee was finally able to borrow money from an employee of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute, the university unit which manages the Women's Studies programme.

The employee, who asked not to be named, said Lee was nervous when she came into the Institute's office.

"I lent her some money. She had nothing," said the employee. "What little I gave her was just to

make sure that she could stretch it for two weeks."

The employee said there was no reason Lee should have been sent to her department.

"I don't know why -- she's not even in our discipline," she said. "Maybe they thought we had some kind of grant."

"Just because she's a woman, they send her to the (Women's Studies department) — how stupid of them," Douglas said.

Financial Aid Director Roger Cote said he did not know anything about the incident. He urged the woman to come back to the financial office to "see what we can do."

Lee returned the \$100 and an additional \$25 last week. She said the extra \$25 should go into a fund to help others in situations similar to hers.

"I want it to be symbolic," she said. "If mothers are in some kind of jam, they can get help."

# Post poster fight

by Jeff Cowley

The postal worker's strike came to a quiet end Friday night, despite literature circulating across campus promoting a confrontation.

Campus authorities were wary of a possible conflict on the striker's picket line after a pair of posters appeared on campus bulletin boards Friday afternoon.

The first set of posters were labelled "U of A Postal Workers Support Committee" and promoted a "Party on the Picket Line." A graphic portrayed a bus running into a clenched fist, with the legend "stop the buses."

The second set of posters were very similar in style to the first set. However, the legend had been changed to "Party on the Picketers," and the graphic depicted a bus running over figures labelled "posties." The posters were sponsored by the "U of A Postal Corporation Support Committee."

After Campus Security notified them, Edmonton City Police quickly removed both sets of posters at 11 a.m. Friday.

Campus Security Director Doug Cargen said the posters were removed due to the belief that they would promote violence, "as well as the University's policy not to be

involved with off-campus activities," such as the postal strike.

Edmonton Police refused to comment on the situation.

The party on the picket line was attended by only two people from the U of A, Christine deMarco and former student Robin Boodie, and was free of any form of organized student violence.

Postal workers, who were playing out the final night of their strike, appeared surprised when they were shown copies of the "party" flyers.

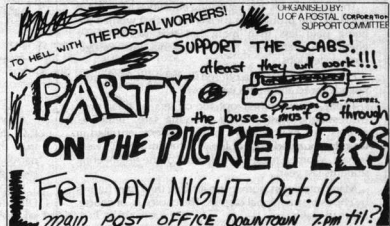
John Bail, President of the Edmonton Postal Workers Union, said that postal workers had not been involved in any campaign to organize students.

"I think it's great that they're having a debate about strikers and scabs," said Bail, as he read over one of the flyers, "but we had nothing to do with this."

Students Union executives are curious about the origin of the posters, as neither set was sanctioned for display.

"We had absolutely nothing to do with them," said Rick Steadman, V.P. Internal.

Campus Security is currently investigating the situation.



Pro postal corporation poster removed by police

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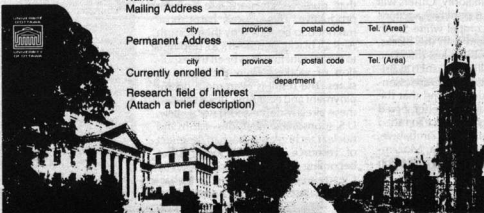
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On the agenda: free beer and goldfish

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Thursday 4:00 Room 282 SUB

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