

opinions

For the mill

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tective gear, lack of information, and excessive exposure to dangerous chemicals, severely threaten the health and safety of workers. According to some estimates, when plants move to Mexico, production speed increases 25%. (*Look Before You Leap*, The Development Group for Alternative Policies, Washington, D.C., 1991, p.7)

While in Mexico, Matilde Arteaga Laragoza of the Authentic Labour Front (FAT) and the Mexican Network for Action Against Free Trade, explained to me what conditions the Network is finding in the maquiladoras.

"At one Green Giant food canning plant, the majority of the workers are between the ages of 12 and 17. According to the Mexican constitution, people aren't allowed to work until they are 18. So when health and other inspectors come, they lock up the workers so that the inspectors won't see how the young people are being exploited.

"People who work in the maquiladoras have about ten years of productivity, because the work is very detailed and very hard. The assembly work affects vision, and the workers' hands and backs are damaged.

There's a high rate of turnover (almost 180% annually) because the workers lack contracts."

Many employers hire workers part-time to avoid paying them a higher salary and benefits. Mexican workers are represented by the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), a government-controlled union which has been known to conspire with foreign transnational corporations against local people.

For example, in 1987, near Mexico City, Ford fired all 2600 workers at its Cuatitlan plant- then rehired them under a new contract modeled after those in its northern plants, that included a 60% cut in salary to 75 cents an hour, the loss of seniority guarantees and the elimination of relief workers, as urinals were installed on the assembly line. (*The Guardian*, July 17, 1991, p.13)

Workers protested, and on January 8, 1990, thugs from the CTM attacked workers on the assembly line, killing one and injuring 40. Workers were outraged and CTM responded by calling an election on June 3, 1991. With TV cameras rolling, and 2000 police on guard, nearly half the workers said they did not want to be represented by the CTM. The Confederation was able to stay in power; maquiladora working conditions were established near Mexico City. (*Guardian*)

Says Matilde, "The maquiladora phenomenon has begun to extend itself into the interior of the country. We worry that all of Mexico will develop into a maquiladora."

The North American Free Trade Agreement is leading that way.

Next week: "Democracy" in Mexico

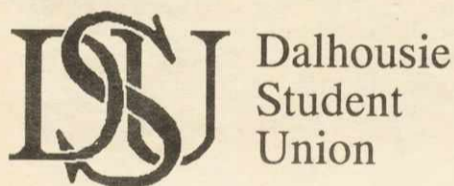
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CHAIR OF COUNCIL SECRETARY

Interested individuals must pick up application and submit it no later than February 3, 1993

Applications may be picked up and dropped off in Room 222 of the Student Union Building.

For more information
Please contact:
Dennis MacNeil
Executive Vice President
Dalhousie Student Union
Phone 494-1106



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY DSU ELECTIONS RETURNING OFFICER (ERO)

Responsible for administration of DSU Elections.

Interested individuals must pick up application and submit it no later than January 29, 1993

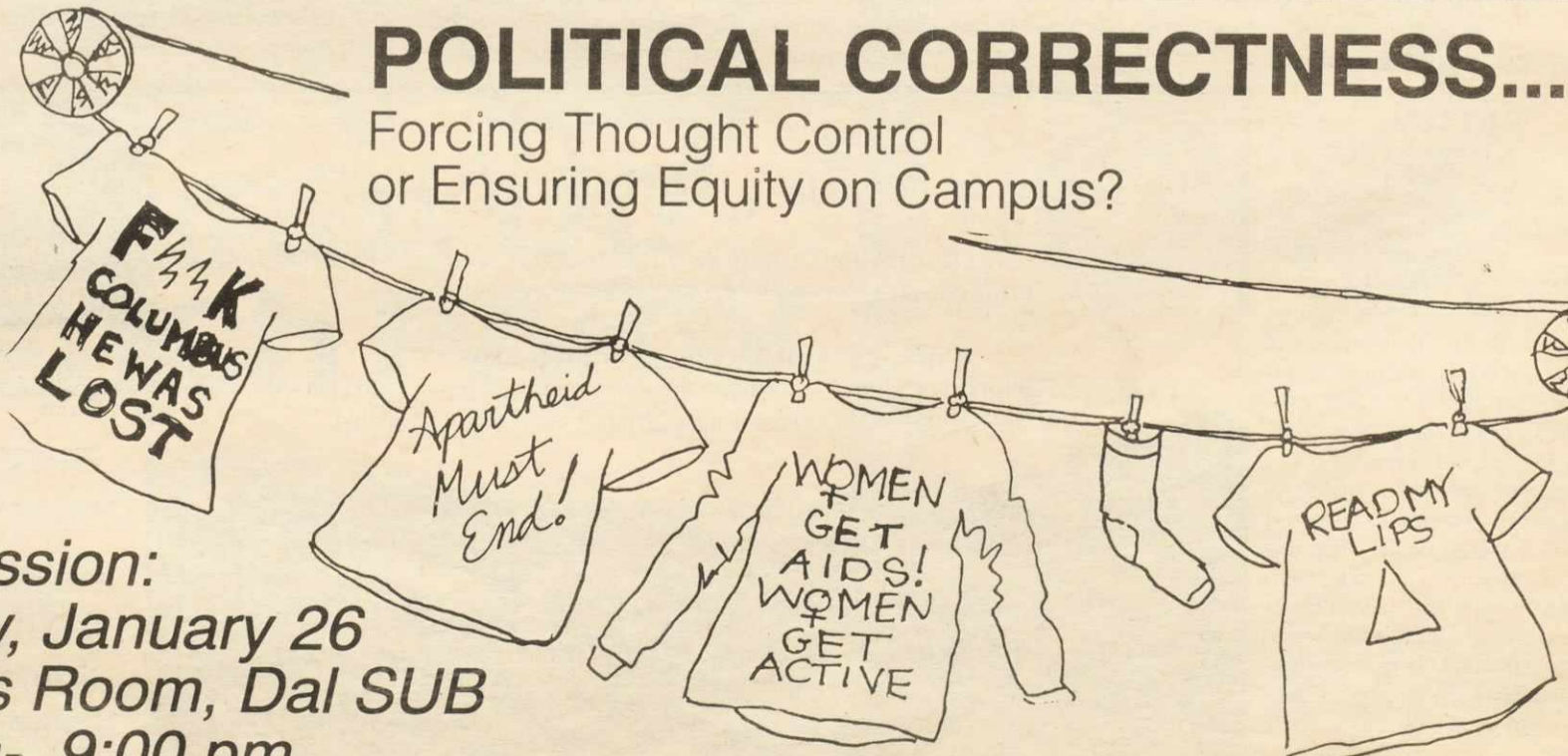
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POLITICAL CORRECTNESS...

Forcing Thought Control
or Ensuring Equity on Campus?



A Discussion:
Tuesday, January 26
McInnes Room, Dal SUB
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm