

# Native students protest funding cuts

OTTAWA (CUP) — Native people in Canada are not going to let the federal government change its post-secondary education assistance program quietly.

Hundreds of students and supporters staged demonstrations across the country March 22 to drive home their dissatisfaction with the capping of the program's funds, which sends 15,000 natives to college or university a year. The changes come into effect April 1.

Besides cutting funding to eligible students from \$7,432 to \$4,800 a year, a new proposal chops the number of months for which Natives can get funding by half.

Money for daycare, special lab clothing and tutorials will be eliminated. And the choice of schools will be limited since the government will only pay for tuition costs at the closest post-secondary school and has substantially reduced travel allowances.

Native students were first hit with enrolment limitations last year when the post-secondary education budget was frozen at \$111 million. This year it has been capped at \$131 million and students have already been turned away from some schools, according to activists.

Native people have not had time to study and respond to the effects of the proposed limits, according to Bev Scow, a University of British Columbia student and co-ordinator of the inter-campus Native Student Network, a provincial lobby group.

"We were expected to respond in five months to a policy they've been working on for five years,"



Native students in Halifax protested the federal government's plan to cap student assistance funding by marching on the legislature

said Scow, who added native students want a moratorium on the implementation of the changes until they can form a consensus on post-secondary educational funding.

The real issue, said federal

Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Kim Campbell, is the philosophical one of whether post-secondary education should be guaranteed as a treaty right. The government's position, she said, is that only public school is

a treaty right. Yet the federal government has covered post-secondary education in the past.

The Network views the new policies as "a means to undermine the federal government responsibility to Indian people

based on an aboriginal right, treaty rights and fiduciary trust responsibility," states a press release.

Campbell said the changes are the result of faults in the program

Continued on page 5

You can change history. . .

## Pereira on perestroika

by Marc Epprecht

Norman Pereira, a leading expert on Russian and Soviet intellectual and political history here at Dalhousie, delivered a well-attended lecture to the Historical Association of Halifax in the Cohn art gallery on March 17th.

Addressing the topic of *perestroika*, he specifically focused on the importance of history in the process of restructuring the Soviet economy. Pereira reminded the audience that the parallel process of *glasnost* or openness is demanding a complete reappraisal of Soviet history — so complete, in fact, that high school textbooks were entirely scrapped last year and final exams were cancelled until new ones could be written.

Gorbachev's reforms have had a profound effect on the intellectual climate of the country, especially in the last two years. They have not, however, appreciably benefited the workers. Indeed, as

the newspaper *Izvestia* editorialized only 2 months ago, the proletariat of the Soviet Union has not fared better after 70 years of revolution than has the proletariat of the bourgeois democracies. "This may not surprise us here," Pereira commented, "but coming from the principal state newspaper, it is a remarkable admission." What is in effect being called for is a second socialist revolution, and this entails re-opening debates which Stalin closed with the great purges of the 1930s.

According to Pereira, *glasnost* has already resulted in the rehabilitation of a number of *personae non gratae*, including Bukharin and Krushchev. Interestingly, professional historians have lagged far behind journalists, filmmakers and pop historians in the spirit of *glasnost*. With their careers and books based on 50 years of "the world's most falsified history", they have a vested interest in preserving the status quo and have thus acted as a

brake on revisionist research. Still, it proceeds faster than anyone could have imagined even six months ago. Most remarkable, given that Gorbachev explicitly bases his own legitimacy on Lenin, even Lenin has been publicly criticized while the name of the great arch-demon of Soviet hagiography, Trotsky, has reappeared in print for the first time in decades.

If all this is indicative of the grass-roots momentum of reform, however, it is also cause for concern and caution. Pereira therefore ended on a guardedly optimistic note. The revolutionary nature of the debates now taking place in the USSR threatens on the one hand a Stalinist backlash and on the other hand bourgeois nationalist revolts in the ethnic republics. In that regard, we haven't seen anything yet with the troubles in tiny Armenia and Estonia. "Just wait until the Ukraine wakes up," Pereira warned.

## Gay man beaten to death

MONTREAL (CUP) — A gang of 10 to 15 youths attacked and killed 23-year-old McGill University student and gay activist Joe Rose on a bus two weekends ago.

According to witnesses, Rose met up with the youths on a city bus March 20 at 4:30 in the morning. They taunted him and called him "faggot". A group of between 10 and 15 people then repeatedly kicked and stabbed him, then fled.

The outspoken gay rights activist was travelling with a friend who suffered minor injuries.

Rose, a former member of Lesbian and Gay Friends of Concordia (LGFC), was afflicted with the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) virus.

"We had already dealt with the fact that he was going to die, but not like that," said friend and fellow LGFC member Peter Tyler. "I wasn't expecting anything like this to happen."

Tyler said gay-bashing is common in Montreal's east village, where Rose was killed. The Concordia student said gays are prime targets because they are viewed as easy prey.

"I'm convinced they singled Joe out because he was gay," Tyler said. "It's an example of out-and-out gay-bashing. We all know that a 'gay' life is apparently not worth as much as a 'straight' one.

"It's okay if you smash (gays') faces with your boots," he added sarcastically.

"It's a big joke to some of these people," said Maurice Rose, Joe's father. "What did everybody else do, stand up and watch?"

Rose's father was in Nova Scotia when he heard of his son's death. "Nothing to me is going to bring him back. I'm not vindictive, but I want his death paid for. I want every one of them charged."

More than 150 people took part in a candlelight vigil March 21 to remember Joe Rose.

Gary Gall, a longtime friend of Rose, said there is no doubt the stabbing was gay-related.

"They thought they would pick on a gay person. They wanted to beat him up because he was a faggot."