

Universities quashed under Tory-corporate agenda

by David McNally

How are we to solve the problems created by chronic underfunding of higher education? In a recent letter to *Excalibur*, I argued that it is necessary to mobilize students, faculty and staff to resist government efforts to make students and

bearpit

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university employees pay through cutbacks, larger classes, layoffs, and wage freezes. I argued that the wealth to fund higher education is there, but that government is following a corporate agenda designed to cut our vital social services.

It is clear that Gerry Tomany disagrees. He prefers private charity and cuts to faculty salaries (Bearpit, March 18). This is the approach advocated classically by

right-wing liberals. Mr. Tomany is entitled to his opinion (with which I most strongly disagree). But it is surely inconsistent for him to characterize me as an adherent of the sort of ultra-liberalism pushed by the likes of Ayn Rand.

Right-wing liberals argue that society has no responsibility for the well-being of its members. Extreme individualists that they are, they insist that each be left to their own devices to sink or swim, conveniently ignoring the impact of systemic inequalities and discrimination. I am a determined opponent of such views. My perspective is indeed, as the headline above Tomany's article noted, a "leftist" one. I believe that the needs of the working majority — for food, housing, health care, education, and so on — should be the priority of society, not the pursuit of corporate profit. For that reason, I reject the insidious notion that cutting the incomes of public employees — be they teachers, hospital orderlies, nurses, secretaries or librarians — represents any way to defend social services. We have the wealth in this society to meet the fundamental needs of all people. The problem is the structure of power which governs the distribution of wealth.

In 1987, more than 118,000 profitable Canadian companies with combined revenues of \$25 billion did not cough up a cent in taxes. Companies that paid no taxes in 1989 included Brascade Re-

sources with profits exceeding \$126 million, and Bramalea Corporation with profits exceeding \$126 million. Closing corporate tax loopholes, and introducing elementary wealth taxes would bring \$11 billion into government coffers.

The underfunding of higher education is not an unalterable fact of nature. It is the result of a deliberate social policy designed to protect corporate wealth while shifting the tax burden onto working people. To argue, as Tomany does, that the answer to underfunding is to cut the incomes of such people (whether they are university teachers or others) is to go along with the corporate agenda, rather than resist it.

Acquiescence in the Tory/corporate agenda by way of self-imposed cuts in incomes will not save jobs or protect the quality of services. It will merely contribute to an environment in which working people tighten their own belts and live less well while a tiny minority laugh all the way to the bank. Moreover, the notion that society's problems can be resolved by "handing over loose change" to its victims is a sad commentary indeed. Personal charity cannot produce homes for the homeless, jobs for the unemployed, health care for

all who need it and education for all who desire it. Yet that is precisely the sort of set-up we should be fighting for. Blaming one another for our social problems is a dead end. Instead of dumping on those of us committed to campaigning to defend social services, Mr. Tomany would be better advised to make common cause against our real foes. The alternative is a continued decline in income for and services available to the vast majority.

Of course, organizing such a fight-back requires that one reject the Tory-corporate agenda which scapegoats public employees (and the ultra-liberal ideology which underpins that agenda). As should be obvious, my whole approach to the question rejects that

ideology. That's why I'll be at the upcoming demonstrations against social service cuts: the April 1 action called by York, University of Toronto and Ryerson anti-cutbacks coalitions, and the April 11 rally organized by Fightback Metro. I don't expect to see many followers of Ayn Rand there.

David McNally teaches political science at York and happily describes himself as a 'leftist.'

"Personal charity cannot produce homes for the homeless..."

There's more to sadomasochism than pleasure & pain

by Cicely Blade

Whoever wrote that article on sadomasochism in the Sexuality Supplement ("The politics of pleasure & pain," Feb. 26) is a moron. The piece was exploitive without being informative, let alone titillating. S and M is a growing, swelling (dare I say sweating), in- and out-of-bed phenomenon.

Power, transgression, variation, pain and pleasure are words that barely begin to wet the issues.

It involves a subculture which crosses all lines: gender, race, class, sexual orientation, public and private space. It involves sex, sex trade, pornography, theatre, art and, of course, politics.

S and M is about empowerment, an exploration/explosion of our minds, our cunts, our pricks and what's underneath our beds, chained to our walls and in the bathroom cupboard.

Crossing border country always carries risk, but within a safe, consensual sexual realm it becomes possible to play with these dangers. Trust and imagination are crucial elements of any scene. Having ripped, wrestled, wrenched our sexualities from the mindblinds of the religious, medical and legal establishments and their suffocating models, we rarely escape unscarred.

Existing on the fringe our voices are silenced, replaced by distortion and sensationalism — the nascent fetish community remains vulnerable from within itself as well as from without.

Sadomasochism is not rape, violence or abuse. S/M in its post-modern reality can no longer be used as a cover-all term for any deviancy. The conflation of rape, violence and abuse with sadomasochist sex practice is a false guise drawn by the anti-sex maniacs who rule dominant discourse. Bestiality, pedophilia, necophilia and cannibalism are not S/M.

Power is a fundamental element in S/M play, but power is fluid, not static in this context. Top/bottom, dominator/submissive — the words are not enough — any attempt to reduce S/M to an oppositional power paradigm is a lie, is lazy and uninformed (or is it inexperienced?). In the article, Ms. Doomflower refers to fetishes as inane — it is she and her article which are inane. The desires of others should be respected. In Gayle Rubin's words, what we all need is "a benign concept of variation."

I am not inane because I cum hard wearing a latex dress and a horse's bit while being fucked by my dykedaddy.

I am a switch, but crave submission. Any safe top would have told Ms. Doomflower that the bottom,

submissive or slave ultimately calls the shots. Bottoms must be responsible and responsive, to their and their partner's own limits. The submissive's limits are the boundaries of play — doms may push, squeeze, persuade their way through limits (that's the dead exciting part), but this involves time, courage, sexspeak, patience and, of course, latex and lubricant in 1992.

Enough! The article pissed me off. If you are curious, try reading *Pleasure and Danger*, an anthology of sex writing; *Coming to Power* by the Samoos, or *Urban Aboriginals* by Geoff Main.

Cicely Blade is an outspoken figure in the local S/M community.

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