

Letters

Continued from page 9

amended to contain a clause prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, as it appears that there is some opposition to the inclusion of this clause. As it now stands, fully 10% of the population is open to both job and housing discrimination by bigots who are fed by the same old myths that homosexuals are intrinsically evil.

The Federal government, the Yukon, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec already have passed a sexual orientation clause in their respective human rights acts. It is time that Nova Scotia did the same.

GLAD with the support of the Student Unions of Nova Scotia (SUNS) will be circulating a peti-

tion on March 6 and 7 at the SUB. We are hoping that the support we will receive can be presented to the Legislature to demonstrate the public opinion here at Dalhousie. We ask you to stop AT OUR TABLE and sign our petition in support of inclusion of sexual orientation in the Human Rights Act.



Remember: The protection we are asking for may also include someone you know such as a sis-

ter, brother, mother, cousin etc. Would you like them to continue to live in fear of losing their job simply because they were born gay?

Alex Stone

Burned up about bulbs

To the Editors:

This letter is in response to the letter written by Mr. Steve Oore in the February 8th edition of the Gazette. The letter contained some cutting remarks about Dalhousie's management of "light bulbs". I am responding as an employee of the Physical Plant and Planning.

Although Mr. Oore relies on sarcasm instead of fact, his statement should not be left unchallenged. Having been a student here at Dalhousie, I can understand Mr. Oore's frustration. However, the way to overcome frustration is not to fabricate or perpetuate myths but to identify and address actual problems. The two lampers are in fact supervised by one person, Mr. Brian McDonald, who is also responsible for managing nine full-time and up to six part-time electricians. This person schedules employees for hundreds of jobs per week (this is not an exaggeration), prepares estimates for future projects and provides electrical consulting for our architects and clients. The past two years have brought with them management layoffs even though he overall workload has increased enormously.

The facts, then, are the exact

opposite of Mr. Oore's claim. I would also point out that it is damaging and counter-productive to make unfounded claims. However, rather than getting into a war of words, I invite Mr. Oore to visit the Department of Physical Plant and Planning and I will be happy to take the time to explain the operation to him. He will realize we are not perfect but at the same time should get an indication of the workload and number of staff. After that, I hope that he would be able to write a second, more informed letter to the Gazette.

I can be contacted at 424-2470 and look forward to hearing from Mr. Oore, or any other of our readers who may be interested in finding out more about our operation.

Rusty James
Assistant Manager
Space Management

Opinion

A dichotomy of belief and action

by Marc Eprecht

Pinkos, Reds and Greens by now mostly accept that no alternative vision of society can proceed without drawing on feminist theory. On the other hand, the somewhat stalled feminist movement of the 1980's can no longer further its task of revolutionizing sexist society without incorporating men into the struggle. It is possible, indeed imperative, that men become feminists, although obviously their incorporation into the movement is fraught with danger and even men who are sincerely committed to a revolution in gender relations face huge obstacles. It but requires the development of a thoroughgoing feminist consciousness, one that will allow them to be a part of the movement without, for example, trying to take it over for their own purposes.

I would like to hazard a few concrete steps that can be taken towards that goal. Forgoing the usual male prerogative of telling women what is good for them I'll restrict myself to one comment specifically for women: would it not help us all if you were less forgiving of male chauvinism and more adamant in resisting the indignities that men (often unconsciously) heap upon you.

As for men, we have to begin by rejecting the false dichotomy of private beliefs and public action. In other words, unless 'liberation' is carried into every part of our day-to-day existence, then it is likely to be illusory. Becoming feminist cannot be a simple intellectual decision but demands specific changes in the way we live our daily lives. This presumes a strong desire to change and a willingness to face the pain it is likely to entail.

1. Between partners there must be a *totally* equal division of domestic labour, one where each is capable and confident of doing those tasks which are normally reserved for the opposite sex. This could be considered 'inefficient', but so what? The point is not whether your house looks like

Mr. Clean just breezed through but that you daily break down sexual work stereotypes.

2. In that respect, men in particular must be willing to eat humble pie as they attempt to learn "women's work". On the other hand, both men and women must be willing to concede authority in their respective "traditional" spheres.

3. Men are notoriously inadequate at expressing their feelings and rely upon women to do the bulk of the emotional work. Meanwhile, a number of areas remain where men are expected to show leadership, decisiveness and assertion, not least of all in courtship. Surely an effort needs to be made to tackle this fundamental

source of gender stereotyping and tension.

4. Men have to get out of the habit of trivializing women's fears of rape, or distrust of the justice, political and medical establishments. Also, stop deriding women's sensitivity to other people and their emotions as 'cute' intuition.

5. Men must not simply toler-

as normal and desirable for humans to let out pent-up emotions and take it easy once a month? While at it, why not admit that the vaunted 'natural efficiency' of the male body is largely mythical?

6. Men have to cease the habit of regarding other people, male and female, as commodities. Men often do that unconsciously when, for instance, they take pride in "their" woman, whose appearance or wit enhances their own reputation.

7. Homophobia, fetishization and pornography are all symptomatic of the same deep malaise: the need to dominate and dehumanize other people. Any tendency towards them must therefore be honestly faced and expunged.

8. Connected to this is the need to honestly accept one's own unfettered sexuality. Since most men rigorously suppress any bi- or homosexual tendencies, this means a redefinition of self which accepts them without guilt or revulsion. It also means a broadened appreciation of what is sensual, not in a hedonistic manner but simply in a way that accords the body equal respect as that which is normally reserved for the mind.

9. Men need to be aware of and renounce the special privileges they are often accorded merely on the basis of being men. The other side of this is an awareness of the many ways that we have constructed society (including our buildings and bureaucracies) in anti-woman or anti-child ways. Men must then show solidarity with women by joining them in practical struggles against these biases, eg. support for equal wages and other labour issues such as maternity/paternity leave.

10. Men need to become aware of how degradation, fear, poverty and injustice are part of women's daily experience. Since we are generally shielded from that kind of information, it requires a special effort to find out, for exam-

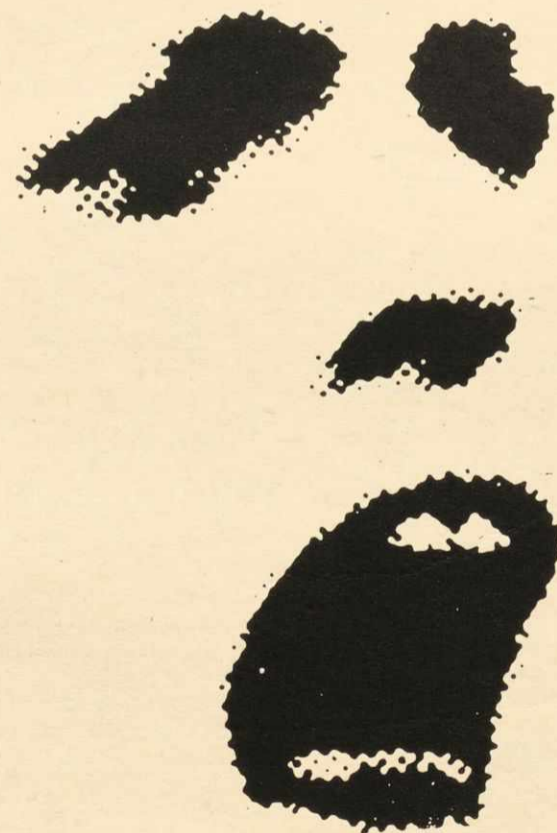
ple, by volunteer work with battered women or, at the very least, reading women's literature. It also requires keeping abreast of current debates and political struggles over "women's issues" like abortion and daycare. Empathy must be honed and cultivated by the outrage which flows from knowledge of the full extent of women's oppression.

11. One must be constantly vigilant against sexism in the language, whether overt (as in chairman, mankind, slut) or subtle (as in metaphors like those which tend to equate nature with femininity or science with masculinity).

12. As consciousness develops, one becomes increasingly aware of the pervasiveness of sexist ideology. At that time it is essential to speak out in protest. It is no use becoming a feminist and then hiding your beliefs for 'social reasons'.

13. Finally, there is no experience more vital to humanity than giving life, an experience which men have traditionally cut themselves off from. That being the case, and if one is in a position to fully participate in the birth and rearing of children, then why delay? Learning to share the experience of children can only cement and enhance the feminist consciousness that has been developed up to then.

In conclusion, beware the 'liberated man', even those who are not self-righteous, for there can never be a conclusive state of 'liberation'. Rather, a feminist can only aspire to a *process of liberating* for which we need to foster a daily, continuous commitment to recreate. That, of course, is then only the starting point, for once there, it is impossible to avoid seeing that sexism has a material base in our society. Consciousness of an oppressive sex/gender system therefore must lead to consciousness of class conflict as well. Indeed, I contend that the one without the other can only fail to reach its full, revolutionary potential.



ate women's physiology as a "faulty" version of their own but should respect the differences between men and women as a dialectic that can spark creativity. For example, rather than regarding the pre-menstrual syndrome which affects some women as an evidence that all women's bodies are defective, could it not be seen