

Pepper sprayed vision

Are Dal students blind, or just plain lazy?

Last November students at the University of British Columbia protested the fact that then-Indonesian president Suharto and Chinese leader Jiang Zemin were allowed to walk on Canadian soil at the APEC conference. They were pepper sprayed, physically harassed, had their signs stolen and even had a Tibetan flag confiscated by RCMP officers. They were arrested and then released hours later without being charged — all for protesting the actions of brutal dictators by constitutional means.

Would students at Dalhousie ever put themselves in that position? Would we take the initiative? Would we risk bodily harm in protest of something or somebody that doesn't directly affect our immediate lives?

No.

Two distinct political climates exist in British Columbia and Nova Scotia. Whereas BC has a much more socialist background, Nova Scotia comes from a staunch British heritage. This heritage breeds a more conservative ideology which favours a lobby approach and evolutionary change as opposed to radical public protest. These two climates have influenced the reactions that students at Dal and UBC have to events of questionable morality. Dal is obviously a more conservative school.

But being conservative isn't that bad.

Conservatism implies a particular caution when faced with important issues. Although the process leading to public action is slower, what usually results are more thorough thoughts and decisions. Change just doesn't happen for its own sake, but rather because it would benefit society as a whole.

This methodical approach usually rules out activities designed to publicly embarrass or call into question the judgement of

with Dal. The administration felt that it was controversial enough to warrant a closed-door ceremony — but apparently not controversial enough for Dal or TUNS students to take a stand and show their discontent, if we had any at all.

The only real protest by Dal students in our years here occurred last March when approximately 500 students gathered on campus to show their anger about the forthcoming faculty strike.

But how effective was that protest? First, think about how long it actually took us to show our disapproval with the disgustingly slow contract talks between the faculty and the administration, and then think about the protest itself. It began as a good idea, but unfortunately the hot chocolate and hot dogs ran out, and it was a little cold, so we all quickly retreated to the cozy confines of our respective homes. The only thing we really protested was the cold weather and the obvious shortage of hot food.

The fact that we are all here implies that we are not lazy or ignorant, that at some point we had to express an interest in what was happening around us.

But we couldn't even endure the coldness of a late winter's afternoon, let alone pepper-sprayed eyes and the excessive force of brutish police officers.

**BRIANNE JOHNSTON
AND GREG McFARLANE**

Editorial

governing officials. As a result, we are more liked in the community.

But are we liked because we're spineless? Are we liked because Dal's student population seems reluctant to take a moral stand on any pressing issue?

Our ambivalence towards important issues makes us look ignorant, lazy, apathetic and powerless in the eyes of the public. What's even worse is that it appears we're happy with that public image.

For example, in March of 1997, Suharto's Minister of Industry and Trade, Tunky Ariwibowo, was given an honorary degree by TUNS, which was about to become amalgamated

Letters

Biased reporting

To the editor,

It has recently come to my attention that certain individuals at Dalhousie consider themselves to be the touchstone against which all things are determined to be moral. First of all, in response to the controversial article contained within it, the last issue of *the Picaro* was confiscated from the Dal campus by "anonymous individuals". Second of all, the staff of the Gazette seem to believe that simply because they think something is true that it should be considered fact.

Unless there was some secret referendum that I do not know about, not all students at Dal were given the opportunity to read the controversial article contained in the last *Picaro*. I believe that these readers should realize that "anonymous individuals" have taken it upon themselves to decide for you what you should or should not read. Students at Dal should defend their right to read something and develop their own opinion by speaking out against this obvious example of censorship.

Next I would like to address the "news" story that ran in the last edition of the Gazette, "Mount paper retracts racist, sexist article". I would like to begin by saying that when you run something in the news section you are presenting it as fact, something that nobody could reasonably contradict. If something is a fact there is no grey area surrounding it. In stating that the article "Take Back the Bullshit" is, in fact, racist and sexist, the Gazette is asserting that the article is racist and sexist in its language, focus, and intent. This is not an uncontested claim, and is therefore not a fact, but an opinion of the Gazette staff, and therefore belongs in the opinions section.

The Gazette article in question was horribly one-sided, it did not represent the other side of the issue which believes that Stephen Brown's article is not completely sexist and racist. When I was interviewed for this story I stated that even though the language of "Take Back the Bullshit" can be considered racist or sexist, which I apologize for not seeing initially, the purpose of the piece was not to promote racist or sexist ideals. However, this quote of mine was not featured in the story. The claim that "Take Back the Bullshit" is

racist and sexist was allowed to stand uncontested.

With this deplorably biased and inaccurate "news" story the Gazette does not seem like a reliable reporter of the facts, but rather an irresponsible publication which is too eager to jump on the band wagon and willing to bend to social pressures from "anonymous individuals". The Gazette has failed to realize that there are different points of view out there, and the staff should take their heads out of their asses and look outside of their own little worlds.

**Tim Boudreau
Editor-in-Chief
The Picaro**

Note: The Gazette apologizes for deeming the article to be racist and sexist. It is not our place to make such claims in a news section. Also, the Gazette apologizes for stating that the Picaro retracted "Take Back the Bullshit". The Picaro has apologized for printing the piece, but the newspaper has not retracted it.

The bounds of common courtesy

To the editor,

In your news article, "Mount paper retracts sexist, racist article", you talk of how the Dalhousie Women's Centre complained of the distribution of Mount Saint Vincent's student paper, *the Picaro*, which contained an article entitled "Take Back the Bullshit". The article goes on to say that within the week that the paper was distributed, "all issues of *the Picaro* had been anonymously removed from the SUB lobby". The implication that can be read into this is that the Dalhousie Women's Centre is responsible for the paper's removal from the Dal SUB.

The Women's Centre did not remove all the copies of *the Picaro* from the SUB, nor did we encourage anyone else to do so. Your readers should know that while we were completely sickened by the article that appeared in that issue, we would never step beyond the bounds of common courtesy and respect and scoop up all the copies. Besides, what would we do with them? We didn't want them.

**Patricia Thomson
Director,
Dalhousie Women's Centre**

Why would anyone read a paper other than the Gazette Reggie?

Gosh, I can't imagine why. Wilbur, I can't imagine why.



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All submissions must be typed double-spaced on paper, e-mailed, or on a Mac or IBM 3 1/2 inch disk, in a WP version not greater than Word 6.0 or equivalent. The deadline is Mondays at 4:30 p.m.

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