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The Conflict of Races

The *Gazette* has received this week several rather irate letters as a result of an article entitled "Foreign Students Must Co-operate," which appeared on Page 3 of last week's issue. The article was intended as personal comment on the part of the *Gazette* Students' Council Reporter, but due to a printing error which resulted in the omission of the feature by-line, some confusion has arisen with respect to the *Gazette's* official stand on the FROS-ISA question. Accordingly we wish here to make plain our views on what must inevitably be a touchy and emotion-ridden problem.

F. R. O. S.

The *Gazette* was, and is still, in favour of the Council's abolition of FROS two weeks ago. The intentions of this organization, indicated in its own title (Friendly Relations With Overseas Students), were unquestionably laudable, and there is little doubt that a Society wishing to promote contact between Canadian and foreign students should be encouraged.

But FROS fell down on two counts. First, Canadian students, with a very few exceptions, did not take active part in the organization, with the result that the only relations developed were among the foreign students themselves as a group apart. Second, the very nature of the organization's activities were in themselves self-defeating. For FROS was organized on a purely social basis, confining its work to the arranging of teas, parties, dances, and other gatherings of a gregarious character.

Yet it becomes immediately apparent that social custom is perhaps the one ground upon which members of different nations have the least in common. A continental Indian, for example, comes from a country in which boys normally do not "date" girls in western fashion, but rather court them under parental scrutiny in the home as a prelude to a family-arranged marriage. Similarly, students from the Orient are neither accustomed to, nor interested in, gyrating to rock-and-roll or Caribbean calypso, while West Indians are most certainly not in the least enthused about balancing teacups according to the fashions established by Halifax society.

Dalhousie students and Halifax families who have shown hospitality in providing facilities for these meetings are, of course, to be warmly commended for their interest, but the fact remains that this kind of activity leads to no constructive and effective end.

... bigotry and pettiness ...

Sir:

The quality of articles in the *Gazette* reached a new low with the publication of an article in last week's edition entitled "Foreign Students Must Co-operate." Although the *Dalhousie Gazette* is usually filled with bigotry, pettiness, and incorrect reporting, the aforementioned article surpasses anything previously printed. It is the maximum in bad taste.

Having attended the first meeting of ISA, I firmly believe Miss Connolly to be entirely mistaken when she states that "the overseas students felt it was up to Canadians to make all the advances." Perhaps a few would like this but the general impression I received was that the overseas students would like the support of Canadian students but only to supplement their own efforts. When one foreign student opposed a motion to restrict Cana-

If there is any truth in the allegation that the West Indians dominated FROS, it is simply explained by the facts (1) that they are the most numerous foreign student body on campus, (2) that other foreign students were not interested in the social arrangements provided by the Society, and (3) that the West Indians are the most likely to appreciate the North American approach because their customs are oriented along more "western" lines.

Accordingly the *Gazette* sees little damage in FROS' extinction.

I. S. A.

The newly-formed International Students Association is, however, another thing altogether. A recent introductory meeting of this organization produced a statement which specifically renounces any intention to "enrich anybody's social life," and it provides a two-fold program:

1. To promote cultural exchange among students of world communities represented in the university.
2. To make known and overcome the problems of these students attending Dalhousie University."

The Association plans "to get things done in a concrete way of working with immigration authorities (immigration authorities have a host of problematical regulations regarding foreign students here), government, municipal officials, and those in authority in (the university)."

While viewing the promotion of "cultural exchange" as a somewhat nebulous and ill-defined purpose, the *Gazette* feels that the organization's methods of approach to this and other more concrete issues is constructive and realistic, and therefore extends its whole-hearted approval to the undertaking.

Moreover, it encourages Canadian students to participate actively, for their help and interest is essential to the Association's success, and we would like to point out that Canadians stand to gain much by a business-like and serious contact with representatives of other nations taking courses here.

BIGOTS

If, finally, there are members among the Canadian student body who feels that foreign students have no problems, and that racial prejudice is an issue confined to Little Rock and Africa, may we hasten to assure them that such is not the case. Quite the reverse, for Halifax has more than its full share of racially bigoted citizens, and Dalhousie has an equally deplorable number of prejudiced and ignorant students.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

dian participation in the executive of the ISA and instead suggested the executive be entirely Canadian, he was trying only to avoid a repetition of FROS and perhaps it is from this that the weird illusion that overseas students want Canadian students to do all the work arose.

Would somebody please explain why foreign student lack of participation in such organizations as NFCUS is viewed with alarm. I would be willing to wager the percentage of foreign students is not much lower than the percentage of Canadian students attending these meetings. In regards to the statement that the West Indians took over FROS, everyone knows this to be so, but who is at fault? It is not possible for a small group to take over any organization if the meetings are well attended, and if they are the most numerous group attending the meetings, they have a right to take over—that is democracy.

Why did the *Gazette* take up its space in criticizing an abolished organization when it could have given the new ISA the space for support and encouragement. The International Students Association could be one of the most useful groups on campus, so let's get behind it. Please remember that this is an international society and Canada is a nation.

A. B.
(A Canadian Student)

P.S. The support of the Dalhousie *Gazette* would be a tremendous advantage to the ISA. How about it editor?

Ed's Note:

Student Council Reporter and Commentator Ian MacKenzie stands firmly by his article. His comment: "I don't feel that anything that I wrote in that article was an exaggeration. My comments arose from the Students' Council meeting which abolished FROS. To the best of my knowledge it was an accurate commentary on the proceedings there."

The *Gazette* finds it difficult to reconcile anonymous reader A.B.'s postscript with his assessment of this newspaper in his first paragraph, but for our official stand, see our editorial columns.

...lack of charity...

Sir:

I should like to voice my protest to the article appearing in a recent edition of your newspaper.

In the article entitled "Foreign Students Must Co-operate" the climate of opinion among Foreign Students was completely misrepresented. The so-called "isolated element" took over FROS at a time when the number of Canadian interested became so small that a society of Canadian couldn't possibly have been formed.

Your article next states that FROS "degenerated into a West Indian

Club." I submit that this choice of words is most unfortunate as it implies that a specific national element on our campus is degenerate.

As a Canadian student who is concerned about the lack of charity with which foreign students are accepted in Halifax, I had occasion to be at both meetings where the abolition of FROS was discussed. In both cases a *Gazette* reporter was present. It is indeed unfortunate that the attitudes of one particular group had to be chosen to be portrayed in such an irresponsible manner.

On a campus such as ours, Sir, I feel that the press should strive to be charitable and above all accurate when the interests of one or more national or racial groups are involved.

F. TIBBETTS,
41 Chestnut.

...backbiting...

Sir:

Undoubtedly the vigorous stylistic elegance, content and integrity — a rare trilogy in journalism — of the *Gazette's* editorial ranks it well over average Canadian editorializing, and it is for this reason I feel unduly distressed by your rebuke of the Soviets who carried with them "an atmosphere of totalitarian party control . . . a sinister quality that brought home to us the reality of the threat facing us."

What is essential, and what transcends the clash of ideology is that we continue to explore every channel of communication between us and fight to keep them open. I take it that you are conscious of the implication of failing to do so? The spirit of the editorial is aimed at liquidating these channels, or at least of throwing a pall of disrepute over them.

While recognizing the necessity of these exchanges, we must also struggle for a drastic revamping of the manner in which they have been held. In this way the propagandist blast of opposing parties can be mitigated, thus permitting sincerest human contacts.

The atmosphere was rat-ridden given the confrontation of opposed theses and inevitably turned out to be a 'dialogue des sourds', or, if you prefer a miniaturized version of the XV General Assembly. I believe by overhauling the structure we can do better than the ruling of anathemas and mutual backbiting will not serve to bring us closer.

Frederick Clairmante.

Ed's Note: Dr. Clairmante is Assistant Professor of Economics (Kings) in the Dalhousie Economics Department.

TO ALL FACULTIES

No skates are to be worn in the Gym Locker Room. A \$2.00 fine will be charged to offenders.

West Indians, for example, inform us that several of the local barbershops refuse to tend their grooming needs, while foreign students in general each year report insults and rebuffs received at the hands of Halifax landladies. (Choice sample from one housekeeper with a 'Room for Rent' sign on her door: "I myself don't in the least mind having a foreigner in the house; it's just that . . . well . . . I don't want my children brought up with a . . . stranger around.").

On the campus itself, we have heard of difficulties encountered by foreign students in working with Canadians on organizational executives, while many complain bitterly and resentfully about insulting treatment from Canadian girls attending Dalhousie dances. Last week, some enterprising social dreg wantonly ripped 18 ISA posters from notice boards.

There are, of course, two sides to every question, and we do not wish to imply that all foreign students are saints or that all Canadian students are fiends.

But we are pointing out that Dalhousians and Haligonians, as groups, have no right to pat their collective backs as a symbol of self-righteous piety.