

## For CUPE 1392

# Solidarity needed

by Marc Allain

The University has changed its tune. Its offer to the striking CUPE workers is no longer "all it can afford", but has instead become "fair and reasonable." For the over 200 people out on strike whose incomes hover near the poverty line statements like these are the most base of insults.

The CUPE workers refused the University's offer months ago primarily because it was "unfair" and "unreasonable" to expect them to continue working for pitiful sums. The merits of their case need not be reiterated.

The main question now before those concerned over the fate of the strikers is how to bring the strike to a quick and successful conclusion. Students have been asked to refrain from scabbing i.e. from doing the work normally done by the strikers. With a few exceptions this appears to have been successful. Management scabs, however, have been able to adequately carry out minimal cleaning tasks. The hope of mountains of garbage forcing the administration to give way just hasn't materialized.

The Union has played their trump card. They have removed their labour power and have been unable to visibly affect the operations of their work place. Another tactic is therefore required. The logical next step would be to call for the solidarity of the other workers on campus.

This call has not gone out presumably because of the tenuous nature of the other organizations on campus. Fearing a poor response the union has simply not made the call.

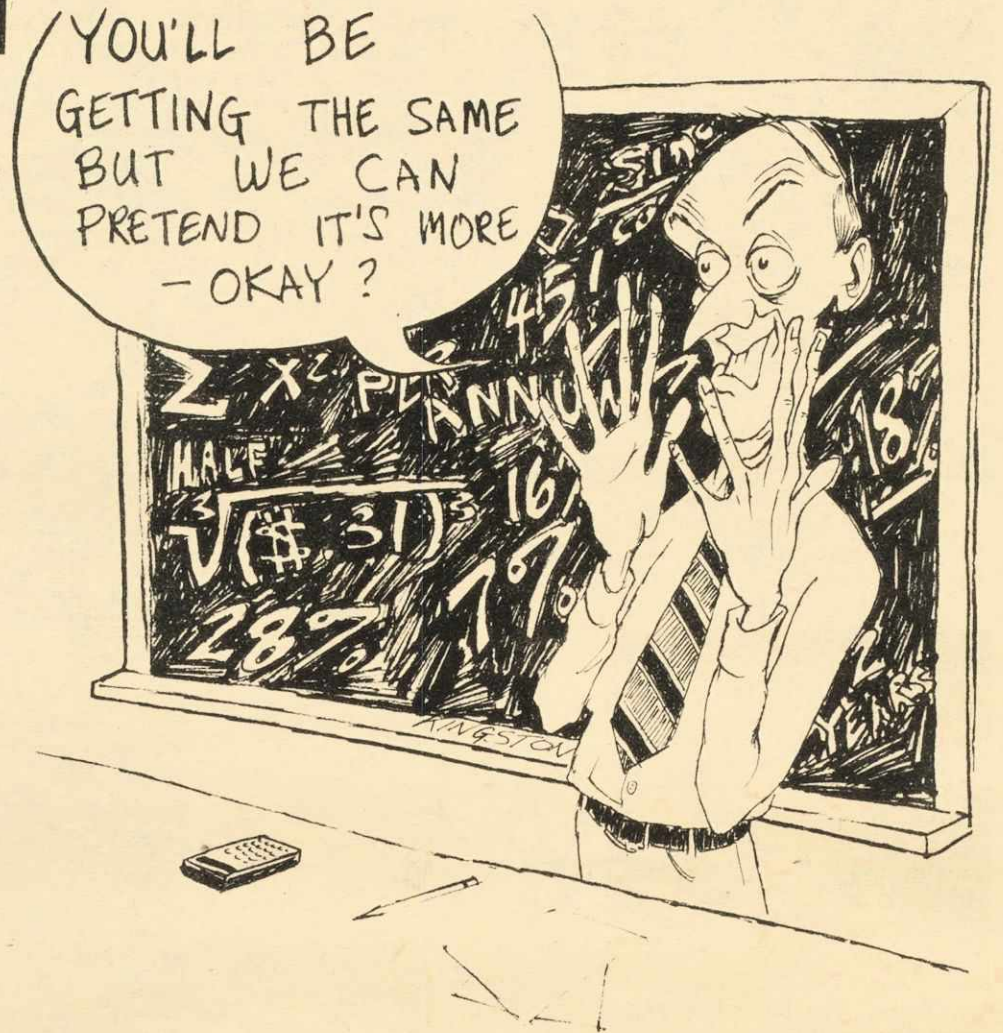
The lack of group cohesion outside of the CUPE and IUOE union is conspicuous. The two larger unions on campus, the faculty and the clerical and technical staff, are far from unified groups. Yet it requires no great leap of the imagination to see links between their interests and the present CUPE struggle.

The CUPE workers are in effect waging a battle that both the faculty and DSA will soon be facing.

It appears obvious that Dalhousie is consciously resisting the CUPE demands in order to solidify its bargaining position against the new faculty union. Thwarting an insignificant wage increase now could save

the University considerable amounts in the very near future. This should be obvious to the members of faculty and staff who are approaching negotiations with Dalhousie.

In their own self interests they should, as organizations, be working with the strikers and advancing tactics that will guarantee them victory.



## the Dalhousie Gazette

The Dalhousie Gazette, Canada's oldest college newspaper, is the weekly publication of the Dalhousie Student Union members, and is a founding member of Canadian University Press.

The views expressed in The Dalhousie Gazette are not necessarily those of the Dalhousie Student Union, the editor or the collective staff. We reserve the right to edit material for space or legal reasons, or if it is considered offensive to our readers.

The deadline for articles and letters-to-the-editor is noon on Monday. No unsigned material will be accepted but anonymity may be granted on request. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be typed on a 64-character line and double spaced.

Advertising must be submitted by noon on the Friday preceding publication. National Advertising is handled through Youthstream, 307 Davenport Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1K5 (416) 925-6359.

Our office is located on the third floor of the Dalhousie Student Union Building. Our mailing address is the Dalhousie Gazette, Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S. B3H 4J2. You can reach us by telephone at (902) 424-2507.

The subscription price is \$9 per year (25 issues), and our International Standard Serial Number is CN ISSN 0011-5819.

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The article entitled "Union must strengthen itself" last week's Gazette should have contained the regular "comment" disclaimer. Due to an oversight by the production staff, however, the disclaimer was omitted.

Staff for this week: Murray Kingston, Michael Cormier, Maria Rey, Cheryl Downton, Peter Dean, Sandy Houston, Kent Rodgers, Bobby Pinto, Brent Melanson, Jeff Round, Kyle Jolliffe, Valerie Mansour, Leo Jacobs, Glenn Walton, Mark Simkins, Robin Metcalfe, Barry Sinervo, Eric Simpson, Sheila Douglas, Nicola Swainson, Tony Kelly, Debra Perrott.

## Letters

### More strike support

To the Gazette:

Members of GLAD (Gays & Lesbians at Dalhousie) would like to announce their decision to support the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 1392 in its strike against Dalhousie University for better contract terms.

A letter to this effect has been sent to Dalhousie president Henry Hicks. As well, GLAD has secured support for the strikers from members of the Halifax gay community.

Jeff Round,  
for GLAD

### Gazette editorial wrong

To the Gazette:

As chairman of the Senate Committee on the Library Collections, I welcomed your recent factual report on library resources. As you noted, the purchasing power of the book budgets declined sharply in recent years. As a result, adequate support for continuing—and particularly for new—academic programmes is becoming increasingly difficult.

## University's offer

University Vice-President Louis Vagianos says the University has moved "a substantial way" with its latest offer. According to Gazette calculations however there is little evidence to substantiate this statement.

A single 52 cent increase would bring striking CUPE members as much money over 20 months as would the administration's offer of a multi-stage 85 cent increase.

Under the administration's offer, only 40 cents of the offer would be retroactive to September 1.

The workers would receive a 20-cent increase on September 1, 1979. As they would have this for only eight of the 20-month contract, this is equivalent to an eight-cent increase over the life of the contract.

A further 15-cent increase on January 1, 1980, would be equivalent to a four-cent increase over the life of the contract.

A final increase of 10 cents, on the last day of the contract, would not benefit the cleaning staff during this contract.

**UNIVERSITY'S OFFER**      **ACTUAL INCREASE OVER THE DURATION OF THE CONTRACT**

40c retroactive to September 1, 1978	40c
20c increase on September 1, 1979	8c
15c increase on January 1, 1980	4c
10c increase on April 1, 1980, the last day of the proposed contract	0
85c staggered original offer 31c over 12 months—new offer 52c over 20 months	52c real

To suggest that the selfishness of the "Administration" is causing this squeeze would not just be a cheap and obvious distortion; it would be a deliberate misrepresentation of the University's financial situation. Regrettably, the Gazette's tendentious coverage of the CUPE strike involves just this sort of misrepresentation. Dalhousie is not "conspicuously prosperous". Nor have its "ambitious expansion plans continued unabated".

Consider the facts:

- 1) Money for buildings is earmarked by donors. Dalplex and Dental building money is thus not available for other projects.
- 2) The principal of Dalhousie's endowment cannot legally be touched.
- 3) Income from the endowment is legally restricted to specific education purposes—and in any event is less than ten percent of the operating budget.

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