

Prospects bleak

Students should unite

Comment is an opinion column open to members of the university community who wish to present an informed opinion on a topic of their selection.

by John Leonard

There isn't a reader of this newspaper who isn't painfully preoccupied with bleak prospects for making a living at something. Students of today were wanted children but are very unwanted adults—people facing life long under or unemployment. It is the paramount reality that shapes the outlook of students, who only ten years ago would have been virtually assured of a well paying job in either government or corporate bureaucracy. Students have gone from being a self consciously privileged minority to surplus labour shuffled off the market temporarily in an economy with a million unemployed and 40% of workers unable to provide poverty level livings for their families.

What has been the response of students to their plight? Strange as it may seem their overwhelming response has been to turn on one another and try frantically to conform to the values and expectations of the multinational concerns that manipulate the Canadian economy. Today's students are desperate, competitive and aggressive—towards each other. It's hard to imagine a more "serious", materialistic, atomized, hard working and submissive person than today's student.

The values and attitudes transmitted by a conservative faculty (who are themselves struggling to maintain their personal security as part of a privileged intellectual elite) are absorbed in an attempt to win the praise and marks students vainly hope will give them the



edge over their friends in the scramble after the handful of jobs available. It's the unspoken common assumption of most students that their fellows are obstacles to be overcome, competitors to be surpassed in the contest of appealing to the employer. The only "proper" concern of a student is his/her own future, and the fight to attain personal security through law, medical and the other professional

and para-professional schools is cut-throat.

It is alien to today's student to see himself in perspective, as one of a large group of people in the same boat—too busy trying to shove the others into the water. He's accepted the whole set of self reinforcing liberal assumptions that isolate him at the centre of his universe and encourage him to be both supportive of the present political and

economic order and anti-social to his fellow human beings. He accepts as well the notion that the very "social forces" making him surplus to the needs of continental state capitalism are the products of "natural forces" rather than the self-interested action of institutions to whom he is irrelevant except as an element in their aggrandisement. He accepts the notion that his enemies are the very people who, like himself, are subject to the monopoly power that distorts a rich country into a land of poverty and depression for an increasing number and plenty for fewer and fewer. He ignores and denies the nature of the institutions and elites that are restructuring this country's economy so that he is surplus labour. Rather than identifying his status as a victim of a particular political economy, and accepting his commonality of interest with the others who share his predicament, he turns on them and identifies with the interests of the group responsible for his own relegation to the unemployed proletariat.

The very tenacity with which students cling to their competition with other students as a way to solve their problems reflects his misunderstanding of the social phenomena in which he is caught. In doing so he signifies not only his own plight but that of the others who are systematically disadvantaged by a social organization that preaches to them the possessive individualism that helps prevent them uniting to do anything about the structure which is making them unemployed.

Chopra vs. Evans

To the Gazette:

I was most disturbed in reading Mr. K. Evans' article: **Council Out Of Control**, in the last issue of the Dalhousie Gazette. One is given to thinking that perhaps the SUB should no longer be titled the 'Student Union Building,' but rather something else, something more applicable to a money grubbing institution. I fear that those in control / authority in this building have taken leave of their senses when they propose minimization of student involvement in student union affairs. This is particularly evident when Mr. Evans refers to lessening student participation in the 'Special Events'. Perhaps, Mr. Evans should be made to realize that these events were created, in part, for the express purpose of getting more students involved in the many different aspects of student union affairs. Such exposure should not be confined to the people in their ivory towers, but should rather encourage greater number of students to participate.

It is suggested that Mr. Evans confine his arguments to a forum more conducive to his own intellect, that being, in the young Progressive Conservatives; rather than poison the minds of Dalhousie Students. It is further suggested that we give the matter of student involvement considerable thought, after all, this is a **Students Building**.

Yours Very Truly,
Kamal B. Chopra M.A.

If Mr. Chopra had read the article properly, I was recommending abolishing the Chairperson—not student input—since we should still have Student Entertainment, Special Events Committees. As well, no one has been interested this year in heading any of the Special Events. Why not allow our regular Entertainment people handle it. As well, when I speak of Student Union policy—I don't tend to make personal attacks on a people I don't agree with—too bad Mr. Chopra couldn't do the same. Obviously, he doesn't have enough policy to present arguments against my point—he has to descend to personal attack.
Keith Evans

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