

AN INTERVIEW WITH HIS MOST PRECIOUS MAJESTY

Gazette co-editor Glenn Walton chatted with John Logan, Student Union President, this first week of classes. Here are excerpts from the interview:

Gazette: Obviously, students are perplexed about John and Jim Logan, the former joke candidates who are now firmly ensconced in the Student Union Offices looking efficient. The question on most students' minds is: what the hell do you stand for, if anything?

Logan: What the hell do we stand for? *Irony*. A one word answer. (Laughs) Is that not good enough? Irony, yes. I'd like to end it on that note. I'll have lots more to say about future questions.

Gazette: How is your administration going to be any different from last year's?

Logan: It'll be a lot funnier, as we'll probably see from future issues of the Gazette. It'll probably be a lot more organized. More spirited, shall we say? To the point. Less bureaucratic. Let me think, I wasn't anticipating this question so it's good that you asked it. *Devious*. This communications report that Peter Rans wrote up I liked. I agreed with a lot of it. If we were to implement that, what would we be doing? We would be more visible.

Gazette: What is the essence of the Communications Report, for those who haven't read it?

Logan: Students basically don't know what's going on on campus, especially in regard to the Student Union. That's been a problem that was one of Gord's (Gord Owen - last year's Student Union President) plat-forms that you guys berated him for last year. I've got a file here on past election promises that I found interesting...all of them promised better communications but none of them, to my knowledge, did anything concrete about it. Now what we're trying to do is pretty well implement almost everything he (Peter Rans) had to say.

I think it's a good example of what we're trying to do generally. You saw that big stack of reports (distributed to Council members last Sunday)...that's another essential difference between other councils and us. We're far less articulate and far less eloquent than any other student council president or vice president, or treasurer for this question so it's good that you asked it. *Devious*. This communications report that Peter Rans wrote up I liked. I agreed with a lot of it. If we were to implement that, what would we be doing? We would be more visible.

Gazette: That's a good lead into the next question; it's about cutbacks. What are your specific plans to protest cutbacks in

education?

Logan: Although we Haven't had council approval yet on it (Gee, I'm already starting to talk like a bureaucrat) we're planning this march on September 30th. We had a first Council meeting and got just a little over quorum, I didn't think it was an appropriate time to bring it up, neither did Science Rep. Caroline Zayid, who I'd like to confer with because we hold different views on external stuff. If they approve it as I expect they as a responsible council will, we should have a rally, as I prefer to call it, downtown on the grand parade with lots of students from TUNS, the Mount, NSCAD, St. Mary's.

That's one form of protest. I think we can get a lot of people mobilized here. I've already asked faculty about it. The president of the Faculty Association has expressed interest in it, profs have been phoning about letters we've circulated; Caroline wrote every department head concerning what cutbacks they suffered and we could put out with your help, some sort of, like a Gazette issue, on cutbacks and how they affect Dalhousie... we're getting pamphlets out on effects of cutbacks, posters...On Cutbacks we're just going to have to educate people. I was at an alumnae meeting this morning and I said that maybe their information committee could help in educating the community about the effect of cutbacks and the economic effect they would have on the town as a whole. Business, tavern owners would have less.

Basically, the first step is to educate people, and the second stage is to educate people more. Never let it be said that we're not doing anything!

Gazette: How would you, John Logan, explain the ominous sounding EPF (Established Program Financing, federal transfer funds to the provinces for social services, post secondary education, and health). That's another bureaucratic phrase that people aren't going to care about.

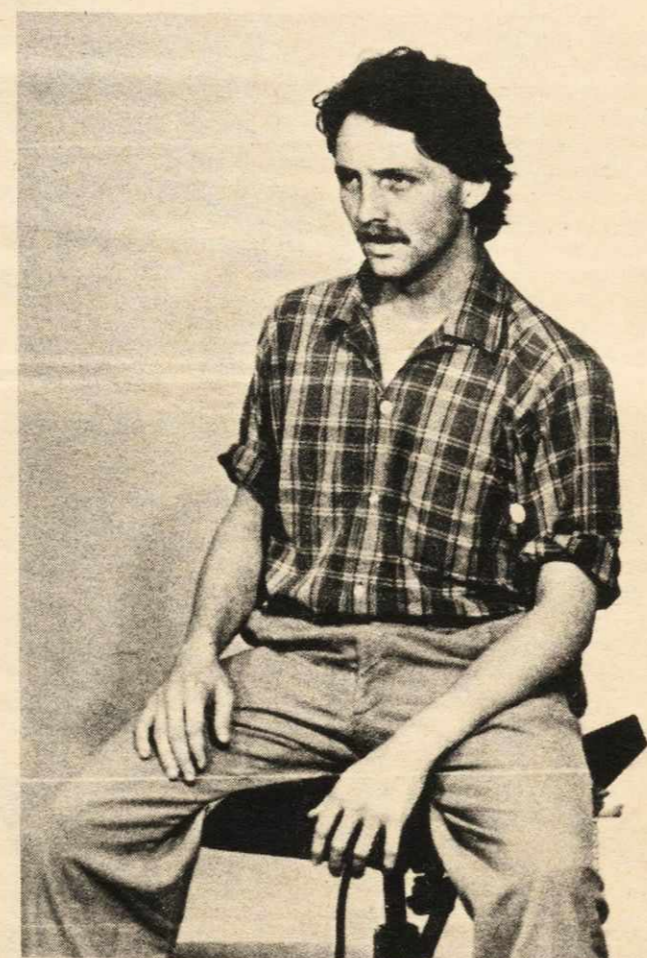
Logan: Let's just say that the federal government has no constituted responsibility to fund education. It's a provincial obligation, but they have for years and years. Now they say they're upset about accountability, they're getting no credit for their money. They have a terrible budget and they want to cut back. Now if you were a politician or I were a politician we would cutback, in Canada we have what is called a brokerage politics system where you have lots of interest groups and you try to keep them pacified and get them to vote for you. You're in business to stay in business... you're obviously interested in the ones who are going to cause the least grief, like students. They have reason to believe that students aren't unified...and won't really kick up a fuss when they get cut back. So of course they're going to try to cut back there. If we can get

mobilized so they won't cut back we're in a better position.

Gazette: What are you planning for the provincial election?

Logan: Well they missed us, enumeration, I was a little upset about that, I've got 2,000 proxy forms outside; we got about ten picked up yesterday by interested students...if you ever mobilized the students you could affect the outcome of the election and I think it should be done in future. But I don't think it's student council's responsibility to tell students how to vote, but to provide them with the information which would help them to make a rational decision on how to vote, and that's what I intend to do. Pretty bureaucratic, isn't it?

what students opinion is, and be able to sign this union's name on a national petition for disarmament than that's a worthwhile effort. But if it costs money let's say it cost \$1,000 to do that I don't think it's a justifiable expense. I think the outcome of such a referendum is a foregone conclusion...I think the Constitution is a pressing issue, I just don't think it's a top priority, not as high a priority as elections or cutbacks for many stuents as entertainment even. But I think it's worthwhile informing the students about it. It's a question of how you do it. Everything boils down to money...On each point you have to make a decision: is it worth it, we're spending Student Union fees. They've announced that they're



Hart/Dal Photo

Gazette: Last year's council was much criticised for taking what many considered a narrow isolationist view of the world in general. Do the words El Salvador, Third World, or even the Constitution mean anything to John Logan, Student Council President?

Logan: (laughs) *John Logan, Student Union President! The third in a series of documentaries about this subject.* Of course they mean something but you've got to have priorities.

Let's take as an example disarmament. I think that's a worthwhile issue to get into, but I don't think it's a priority here at Dalhousie. If we can cheaply, as on our referendum day, find out

going to cutback 1.5 billion (from 18 billion) this would be agreeable to the average student I think. Now, Monique Begin, suggested that the other two wouldn't be cut back, so we can assume all of it is going to come out of post-secondary education. Now if that were the case it would have horrendous consequences.

Gazette: SUNS (Student Union of Nova Scotia) says every year that Donahoe and Co. are deferring education money to other areas.

Logan: It's difficult to prove that. If you try to trace a dollar through the provincial government it's virtually impossible. Now we went down and had a meeting with him and I asked

him point blank to send me the last five years EPF monies and exactly where they went (over \$100,000,000 million a year) and he said "OK, I'll send you a list." But you see the problem is in the definition of post secondary education. Nova Scotia and N.B., I think, have a definition which includes grade twelve and vocational where other provinces don't. I and a lot of other people think that shouldn't be included. In Ontario it all goes to universities and colleges. That's the major issue. They're not debating it, they're doing it. The way the provincial government looks at their whole budget they don't look at EPF...they just put it all in a pot and say let's see what we can give to education. Now their budget is so bad; as you know they're trying to get it mandated right now...and the Liberals are right; their budget is horrendous, they're virtually bankrupt. So they're the ones, (and the administration at Dal is really worried about this), who are going to be cutback. They know students aren't organized, aren't going to vote against them, although it's reasonable for students to vote against them, to support the party which is going to take care of what they're doing. Students never really got mobilized to vote that way. Plus the fact that they prevented us from voting here anyway so you have to vote by proxy. Also you have to make an informed choice. Do we know that the Liberals are going to be any better?

Gazette: Why do you just mention the Liberals? There's another party running in the election.

Logan: You can vote NDP but then again you're going on hearsay...NDP...They're all the same. I think NDP would be better. I'd vote NDP. Don't put that in there but I would vote NDP.

Gazette: Why not?

Logan: Put it in there, I don't give a damn...the NDP is thinking of suing the government for not enumerating students when they should have, since this is their normal place of residence...I think the Liberals are the only practical alternative provincially. From a realistic point of view I don't think the NDP is going to win...I'm not saying I wouldn't like them to win, I think Alexa MacDonaugh is great.

Gazette: But surely taking a stand on something doesn't necessarily cost money?

Logan: You can get in heated debate over that. If an Arts student...came in and said I think we should be for armament. Should she or he be allowed to vote that way? If Council was going to decide how the students should feel for NUS or CES for disarmament but you know the Arts Society doesn't want disarmament...how's that guy supposed to vote? When you get elected and have a represent my views or the views I think students have, do you have a referendum every time? I'm not sure...I would say...the people that don't come from a specific faculty are here to represent students as a whole. If you think CKDU should be given an axe by students, you should vote against it...It's dicey. You can be convinced both ways. What do you think? I'd like to know what you think about that.

Gazette: I'm interviewing you, you don't want to know what I have to say.

Logan: Yes I do. You can turn the tape off...Later...

Gazette: Where are your election promises now? Such as, having more mounds on campus, wallet size degrees and moving the campus to a warmer climate. Haven't you betrayed the electorate by taking things seriously?

Logan: I don't think so at all. We missed the deadline for the first Gazette. We were going to submit an article on carrying out our election promises but we were so busy with other union matters that we had to let it ride. I think maybe in the next issue, if the Gazette is willing, we might be able to work out something humorous. How do you get the humour across? Do I go out shaking hands and telling jokes? The only way I can get the humour across is with the media's help. Wouldn't you agree?...How do students get apprised of issues? Through the media.

Gazette: You keep turning this around.

Logan: (laughs) I keep turning it around. I'm sorry.



Established Programs Financing? What's that? Stay tuned for a *Gazette* defrieffing on the meaty essence of post-secondary education's financial life-line, why Ottawa wants to cut off \$1.5 billion, the reactions, opinions, accusations and odd insults from our student leaders, provincial representatives and others. Boring stuff? Maybe, but our education depends on it.



Wilkins photo

A happy group it was at the Grawood last April after Student Council elections, but now it's time to start paying the piper. From the left, Gazette co-editor Glenn Walton, the then Vice-President-elect Jim Logan, a supremely supine Marie Gilkinson and Greg Graham (barely defeated candidates) Big Bad John Logan, His Most Precious Majesty, and the like-wise defeated team of Lynn Lamont and Gord Owen.

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