

Can you say lesbian?

It's difficult to say the word "lesbian."

I know of at least two women who preferred to use the word "gay" when coming out to friends and family because it was quicker and easier to say.

Here at the *Gazette* we've been using that and other embarrassing words quite frequently these days.

You see, publishing this week's gay and lesbian supplement meant first talking about it.

At our first staff meeting when the topic came up no one spoke for very long. We were all afraid of looking too interested, too curious or worse yet, too knowledgeable.

Now one month later a large part of the staff have contributed to this special supplement of the paper. Talking helps. It's provided a forum for staff members to be more open about their own sexuality.

Homophobia (fear of homosexuality) isn't often seen in its most

blatant forms at university with its façade of liberalism and Dalhousie is no exception. We may not be guilty of "queer bashing" or refusing to admit gays to university events. Instead we're guilty of silence.

By not talking about issues of concern to gays and lesbians we ignore a large part of the university community. Conservative estimates say that one out of every ten people are openly gay.

This means one thousand Dalhousie students are gay. Imagine 80 out of 800 commerce students are gay, 18 out of 182 engineering students and five out of the 52 members of the Dalhousie Board of Governors.

By publishing this special supplement we don't mean to hand you, the reader, with the correct political line. What we're asking is for you to listen, to talk and to respond.

Silence is scary. □



Illustration: Kimberley Whitchurch, Dal Gazette

Who are we?

Who are we? What do we want? What is the *Gazette* editorial thing all about? How is it that from time to time our editorials don't necessarily follow from week to week? Alas, we will tell all.

Most of us are just middle-class kids who are trying our best to cope with a complex world as best we can. We do not profess to have one vision of utopia or the means to get there from here. Like the student population in general, we come from diverse family, educational and regional backgrounds. Some of us are marxists, some are capitalists, some are anarchists, some are radical feminists and some aren't entirely sure what they are. But that's okay, with the possible exception of Neo-Nazis and the Klu Klux Klan, anybody is welcome to work for us regardless of whether or not they have a political bent.

Our editorials are a product of our Monday planning meeting. At that time any *Gazette* staffer who professes an interest is welcome to head to the Grawood, where huddled around a table with a suitable quantity of beer, we hash out the content of our editorials for the next week. If the opinions reach consensus they appear on this page. If they don't, and the writer is adamant about still doing the piece, then it appears on the opposite page. Sometimes writers prefer to do commentaries instead of editorials and they appear on that page anyway.

Once the opinions are decided on, the editorials are assigned to various writers on staff. Sometimes along the way certain maxims are extracted from the opinions that weren't necessarily part of the planning meeting. Usually they are small variances from the original editorial positions, and end up appearing as a bit inconsistent from week to week.

When these variances do appear we feel we do not need to apologize. We are by no means a monolith in political opinion, and if we were we'd certainly expect to hear about it from you, the readers. You

don't have to have a party membership card to participate in the *Gazette*. We do believe in some basic issues—equal accessibility to education, women's equality in society, peace through disarmament, gay and lesbian rights and equality of opportunity in society, just to name a few.

We do not believe in running sexist, racist, or homophobic material in the paper *not* because we believe in some form of censorship, but because we feel these basic forms of hate literature have no place in our paper. Surely any basic egalitarian principles would supersede any weak claims by proprietors of such literature that they have a right to see this material in print.

Finally, decisions here at the *Gazette* are taken in as democratic a fashion as is functionally possible. Our principles are a product of lengthy examination of the issues and effective debate.

Is there any better way of running a student newspaper? □

Cowardly assaulted

To the editors,

On Oct. 12 I was cowardly assaulted outside the Library while selling *The Marxist-Leninist* and *Canadian Student*. On Oct. 15, two masked hooligans threw a water-bomb at the People's Front anti-war display in the SUB lobby. The Oct. 18 *Gazette* disapproved of the "violence" from the "right" while foully slandering CPC(M-L) as "violent", equating me personally with a "victim of leprosy". In September, it also printed a front page photo, smearing Dalhousie Student Movement as a CPC(M-L) "front group" as if we hide this.

These attacks have surprised students, especially the attitude of the *Gazette* which styles itself as "leftish". The editorial hesitates to defend the democratic right of freedom of expression, but insinuates students are "right wing" while the government is "democratic". Are

these just acts of senseless, individual "violence", or part of the increasing offensive of the rich and their government against the democratic political and economic rights of the people—including students?

One of the preferred methods is to slander CPC(M-L) that it "provokes violence". Across Canada, more than 2,500 arrests of CPC(M-L) activists have occurred. Five of its bookstores have been burned. When not directly organised by the state, these attacks are state-inspired. You are actually participating in these attacks against the people, by obscuring the real source of political violence in Canada. Think of the picture of the president of King's, in the *Mail-Star* this summer, holding up a burnt copy of a book by Enver Hoxha, the baiting remarks of Brian Mulroney, the "peace-through-strength" ravings of Ronald Reagan.

Marxist-Leninist students are attacked because they do not remain aloof from the grave dangers facing students and society. They oppose both superpowers, and fight to implement the progressive and democratic ideals of mankind, for the revolutionary transformation of society from outdated capitalism to socialism.

These are my politics. If these politics are so "inoffensive", then why are both the reactionaries and social democrats so hysterical?

Charles Spurr

Commie-bashing

To the editors,

A couple of weeks ago we had the displeasure of witnessing an incident of "commie bashing." An explanation of all the details which led up to the incident is not necessary, since that was done in your editorial last week.

We would, however, like to express our concern for the personal safety of Mr. Charles Spurr. It is quite unfortunate that in an environment in which the supposed aim is to promote the free discussion of ideas that such intolerant behaviour takes place. Though our own political ideologies may differ from those of the CPC-ML, we do nonetheless believe and encourage their right to express themselves peacefully.

If such a violent display is allowed to exist here, unchecked, then we shudder to think what the outcome will possibly be "out there" where intolerance appears to be more and more in vogue. Will the two of us be the next ones to be punched out for being "bleeding heart liberals?"

Greg Crevier
Andy Knight
Political Science

What is *Gazette* about?

To the editors,

I've been having some problems trying to figure out what the *Gazette* is all about. I've been wondering about this for over three years, but recently some items in the *Gazette* have made me decide to come right out and ask you what you're all about.

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Are you sleeping?

Maybe the campus was sleeping this week. Perhaps students are tiring of midterm exams and papers. Or worse, it could be that people agree with Zeta Psi.

Last week the *Gazette* reprinted a letter and cartoon sent by Zeta Psi's alumni association to their members.

We said at the time that we felt the sexist nature of this material was beyond editorial comment. Instead we asked people at Dalhousie for their comments. Sometimes it's better to make a point by letting people see the kind of tricks

fraternities are still up to for themselves.

When we saw the Zeta Psi letter we were angry and later we were shocked. Angry that men still continue to insult and degrade women under the banner of humour, and shocked that people at Dalhousie seem to buy this excuse.

It could be the boys from 1460 Seymour are just more honest in their views about women than everybody else. (It's been said before.)

Could it be that you're agreeing by your silence?

We hope not. □

Nya Nya

There is a phenomena we have noticed in the letters to the editors we receive. It is what we have come to call, the nya nya. It's the last line that attacks the *Gazette* after arguing a particular point. They vary in scope, ranging from accusations that James Watt is giving technical advice to us to the age old suggestion that the *Gazette* makes great lining for kitty litter boxes (which it does, by the way).

Others take to directly attacking the author whose work they might disagree with. For example, this week staffer Rick Janson found out that he was a "self-styled visionary" working for trendy causes. He's thinking of getting t-shirts made up with that on it now. It does sometimes go to their heads.

In a way the nya nya's have a kind of quaint charm about them. They are emotional outbursts from people who, unsure of their argument, decide to seal things with one last piece of invective.

To save time we have assembled some nya nya's that you may wish to use in the future after one of our articles manages to upset you. Just check off one of the following:

- Die you antisestablishmentarian kooks.
- My dog could do better.

- The engineering faculty could do better.
- Die pig dog lackey's of the corporate state.
- Die pig dog lackey's of Marxist dogma.
- Die.

If all else fails, you could always try, "nya nya." □



Letters Policy

All letters to the editor must be typed double spaced and signed and not exceed 300 words. The *Gazette* reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity and brevity. The *Gazette* also refuses to publish copy that is racist, sexist, libelous or homophobic.

The letters deadline is Monday at noon. Letters can be dropped off at the SUB Enquiry desk or the *Gazette* offices on the 3rd floor.