

editorial

Student protest: the sound of silence

The amount that the Nova Scotian government funds the universities of Nova Scotia works out to about \$6,000 per student, province-wide, per year. This is the smallest educational government grant of any province in Canada at the university level. Yet Nova Scotia, and Halifax in particular, has an extremely high concentration of universities with a correspondingly high percentage of students. The attitude our government has towards education is high-handed and arbitrary, cloistered and removed from reality.

This fundamental lack of concern trickles down to effect the student in many ways: when addressing the necessary nightmare of applying for a student loan, when searching for decent housing, when facing the highest tuition fees in Canada.

Last year at this time, MacLean's magazine ran the now infamous "Guide to Canadian Universities." Predictably enough, all those universities that rated near the top (based on the capricious categories created by MacLean's cracker-jack staff, like: "ratio of beds to students") were satisfied, and all those rated near the bottom of the list complained. So this year MacLean's has totally revamped the categories and shuffled the deck to please most of the people most of the time. Under the auspices of the new, improved guide Dalhousie is listed and considered only as a Graduate School.

I'm certain the thousands of undergrads here appreciate the diplomacy. Meanwhile, in the real world, the Dalhousie Student's Union holds a "Freeze the Fees" rally which manifests as the polar opposite of one held only last year. This isn't "student apathy," this abnegation is learned. The energy disseminated when its utter lack of effect became apparent.

Recently Howard Clark, the president of Dalhousie, stood up in a Student's Council meeting to defend Reuben Cohen, the Chancellor. Never mind that Cohen was unrepentant for the harassing statements he had delivered, and neither was he interested in seriously addressing the concerns of the Student's Council. He is of the top administration, and as such, is simply beyond reproach.

The gulf between the students and the administrators of Dalhousie is a chasm which can't be filled by committees or research groups. The administrative bureaucracy here already naturally creates a hierarchy which places students on the very bottom. Students must realize their own validity within the university environment: students deserve more. Tuition is not merely to line the pockets of the old boy's network. By building their own futures, students create a potential future for society from all the possibilities.

Take your own personal survey: is your university treating you like a student or a commodity? Act accordingly.

Jennifer Beck

BGLAD!: establishing our voice

BGLAD! has taken a new direction and assumed a new perspective in an effort to be a more fulfilling and holistic organisation and also as a result of recent events. We are not only trying to establish a strong and resounding voice on this campus but we are trying to demonstrate that we are legitimate contributing members of the student population.

We have unfortunately been faced with opposition which makes these goals difficult if not next to impossible. Remarks made by Reuben Cohen and support that he has received from Howard Clark has had an unbelievable effect on our personal perspective. We certainly do not believe we are wanted on this campus and are left with a sense of illegitimacy and contempt.

This will not stop our push forward! It only makes us more aware of

the necessity to collect as a community and to destroy the barriers which are placed in our way. It demonstrates that we have many struggles to overcome but we are not prepared to be destroyed by the contempt,

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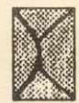
hate or anger directed at us.

We have to ensure our position and our place in our world society. We do not simply wish to be tolerated. To be tolerated only means that we are being isolated and left to continue independently of our com-

munity. We wish to be a powerful and respected component of the community. We want to be recognized as a legitimate, positive and progressive force. One which contributes to a greater understanding and awareness. A world community which respects our needs, desires and the direction of our lives; one which recognizes the importance and necessity of diversity and the power and strength which can be derived from that diversity.

This represents a huge struggle. One which will not be accomplished by apathy and indifference. We need the support and direction of a strong, powerful and committed community. We need to command attention and respect which will place ourselves in a community that recognizes that we are a necessary and vital part of the total, full and complete whole.

Anthony Roberts



LETTERS

The Dalhousie Gazette welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Friday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on Mac or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

No ideology here

To the editor:

Last week's coverage of the incident at Dal involving Mary Clancy and student Jack Roberts ended up quoting me at some length. There were a couple of statements given that I think deserve clarification.

One is this: "The whole thing got out of control at the rally, as ideological debates can get."

I don't recall that I had linked ideological debates with a lack of control (the inference being the use of physical violence—though, for the record, as I understand it Roberts tapped Clancy more than he "hit" her). But let me repeat clearly that the International Socialists (IS) in no way condones the use of force as a method of political debate. However, given the extent to which the quality of education is declining and its costs (and unemployment) rising, it is fully understandable that students are angry and that their frustration has pushed them to take action. Last year students at York University in Toronto threw cooked macaroni at Mulroney.

I might also explain that the IS is not making a case for pacifism. Violence is justified when and where ideological debate is itself being ruled out: in fighting fascist movements and the Klan's brutality, for example; to stop police and company thugs from bust-

ing up picket lines and beating up strikers; to keep anti-choice religious fanatics from blockading our abortion clinics; to prevent the national guard from putting down demonstrations with guns and tanks. This is simply self-defense.

Related to this, also justified is revolutionary violence—that based on a movement of the majority or an oppressed minority which serves to challenge and even overthrow the tiny, privileged class that currently controls and perpetuates an inherently violent, oppressive system, driven as capitalism is by profit and competition rather than human need and democratic cooperation.

A political debate with Mary Clancy or anyone else clearly does not warrant nor succeed by the use of a cane or violence in any manner. Moreover, there is really little point in debating left politics one-on-one with Clancy in the first place. Clancy represents the very forces that are demanding cuts to education and other social services. As a member of the Liberal Party, one of Canada's two parties of big business, Clancy by definition represents conservative, corporate interests; otherwise, she'd find a more progressive organization to belong to!

Finally, I want to respond to the closing quote of last week's article, wherein I disagree with the DSU's decision to bar Roberts from campus political activity and mention how he's sorry for what is "not a monumental big deal." The sense of flippancy was

certainly not intended. All that was meant was that in relation to the scale of the crisis in education (and beyond it), the level of frustration students are feeling, and the degree of militancy required in the past to win student demands, this situation represents a low level of conflict.

Roberts' behavior toward Clancy is reproachable, yet his anger is not. It is the task of student activists and the DSU to seek to join with real allies and organize and build upon such legitimate anger.

Paula Cornwall

Dal International Socialists
Club

Milk and honey

To the editor:

If I suggested that respiration machines are an ideal alternative to human lungs, in acquiring oxygen for the body, you might suggest that I seek long-term psychiatric counselling. However, for decades women have been told that infant formulas produced by commercial manufacturers are as good as, if not superior to, breastmilk produced by mothers.

Aside from the obvious physiologi-

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but anonymity may be granted upon request. * Advertising copy deadline is noon Monday before publication. * The Gazette offices are located on the third floor of the SUB. Come up and have a coffee and tell us what's going on. * The views expressed in the Gazette are not necessarily those of the Students' Union, the editors or the collective staff.