

Democracy attacked

It is somewhat unthinkable that within an institution that professes to uphold and encourage the freest possible exchange of ideas one would have to defend the right to freedom of expression. Unfortunately such an opportunity has now presented itself at Dalhousie.

Two members of a Student Union committee have redefined student organizations to make all student groups with goals and activities that are of a political nature illegitimate. The groups which fall under this category are no longer recognized by the Student Union nor granted the privileges that other student organizations enjoy.

The rationale used to support this decision is that students are repulsed and affronted by overt political discussion, that political activity is somehow abnormal for students and should therefore not occur within the confines of the student union building. Political activity by this definition has now become a non-student activity.

This rationale taken at face value can be dismissed as the product of political immaturity. The implications of the ruling however cannot be dismissed as lightly. By negating that students have the right to organize into recognizable political groups and advance political arguments the committee is blatantly suppressing the freedom of expression. It is by the same token attempting to reduce students to the lowest possible level of political passivity and to model the student union after the image of the university that surrounds it - i.e. an artificial womb that effectively stifles any semblance of political activity.

The committee's decision becomes almost perverse in that it recognizes student council and its affiliates as the only official political organization on campus.

Anyone with a knowledge of the activities of council will admit that the scope of its political activity varies from the extremely narrow to the non-existent. Yet individuals who occupy council positions have appropriated all student political activity as their own preserve.

The situation is not without precedent. An identical situation arose at Dalhousie in the not too distant past when anti-student and anti-democratic legislation was enacted to prevent students from political organization and expression. At that time democratic principles prevailed and forced the repeal of the repressive legislation.

Hopefully history will repeat itself.

by Marc Allain

the Dalhousie Gazette

The Dalhousie Gazette is the weekly publication of the Dalhousie Student Union. The views expressed in the paper are not necessarily those of the Student Union, the editor or the 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 advertising is the Friday noon preceding publication. Articles and letters are due Monday noon. 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.

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Letters

RCMP ad false?

To the Gazette:

I saw with disgust your advertisement for a "rewarding future" with the RCMP. The scandalous conduct of the Force in its dealing with all forms of dissent and minority rights has become of recent concern to all Canadians who value their human and democratic rights.

The record of the paramilitary police force as strike-breakers and notorious protectors of scabs is well-known to anyone with even a smattering of labour history. Their record of racism against native people, blacks and other minority groups is well-known. The strange death of a Nova Scotia Mic Mac Indian woman, Anna Mae Aquash in South Dakota in early 1977 is a most flagrant example of the Force's collusion with the FBI, and its attempts to crush the American Indian Movement, and the fight of Indian people for a better future within their own culture.

This Police Force, recruited almost entirely of white Canadians, has the audacity to portray an Indian as an officer of the Force on their ads. This is in flagrant contradiction to the real facts of RCMP brutality and racism against Indian people, and the fact that the traditions of Indian people stand opposed to whatever values or lack of them the Force stands for. In short, not only is this particular ad a flagrant example of false advertising specially designed to appeal to those who are ignorant of the Force's real history, but I suggest that

all RCMP ads in the Gazette be boycotted on the grounds that the RCMP as a police force has proved itself incapable of serving the real needs of the majority of Canadians. Thanking you,
 Yours faithfully,
 Peter D. Ridley

Editor's note:

There are members of the Gazette staff who find the recent RCMP ad particularly repugnant. The question of boycotting these ads in the future will be discussed at the next staff meeting.

Ads support torturers?

To the Gazette:

I was very disappointed in the Gazette on seeing the "Help Support the Communist Weekly" advertisement (p. 8, Sept. 14). The Gazette usually takes the lead in worthwhile crusades in eliminating oppression (ex: the homosexuals vs the CBC) but what else is communism but oppression? The invisible bars of torture, separation of families are all very real in communist countries, although these facts are not as blatantly exposed as in countries such as Argentina and Uruguay. For instance, the Soviet representatives to the Helsinki Accords were sentenced to fifteen years hard labour under a deranged, sadistic commandant for doing their duty and reporting lack of human rights in the USSR. One man had been married only two weeks before

and it is not expected that he will live to see his wife again. Do the Marxist-Leninists not understand that people are too individual and precious to be molded into one shape in the name of "peace and contentment for all"?

I understand that newspapers rely on advertising for funds, but please be a bit more discriminating. Would you print "Help Support our Torture Campaign"? because to me, that is synonymous with the ad that was run two weeks ago.

Very sincerely,
 Heather Gingles

Editor's note:

The fact that the Gazette accepts advertising from an organization does not mean that we share its ideological stance. Our first issue, which included ads for such diverse entities as the NDP, In Struggle and two banks, amply testifies to this.

It is somewhat ironic, however, that In Struggle, which considers itself a communist organization, does not consider the Soviet Union to be a communist country, and is highly critical, like yourself, of that regime.

Protests committee decision

To the Gazette:

On Tuesday, September 26, the SUB Operations Committee, on which I sit, met to discuss, among other things, the use of the SUB lobby. It was felt by the majority of the voting committee that information desks were antagonizing the student population to an undue degree and

continued on page 10