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for free—leaving aside such externalities as ethics. Therefore, competition does exist; unless one assumes that the kind of student who will sell his or her blood would never give it away. If so, add them to the list of whimpers with which the world will end.

Although the plasma undoubtedly goes towards the excellent end of producing therapeutic products, we question the means. Bioresources is a commercial interest, albeit one whose existence is

necessitated by inadequacies in the structure of the present medical system. The more closely commerce is involved in medicine, if states such as the United States are any example, the higher becomes the price of human life, the lower the value. If more plasma were donated voluntarily, plasma-based products might become less expensive (hard luck on the pharmaceutical companies), and the costs of both medical and pharmaceutical care lowered to the point where both could be provided by the government.

If we have an intrinsic bias, it is against a society where blood, plasma, organs, even life itself is bought and sold, measured in terms of dollars and cents (if at all). We have a bias in favour of a society where blood is not sold but given, where "selective advertising programmes" (the *Dal Gazette*?) look for volunteers not vendors, and where people don't expect to get paid for what ought to be a social duty. Somehow we do not see Bioresources sharing that vision.

A.L. Penny  
P.F. Dawson

## The nature of the Ethiopian disaster

By TADISSE A. WOLDU

There have been a lot of relief efforts by the Dalhousie community and others in the last month to help the drought victims of Ethiopia. I thought it would be very important to reveal the nature of such a disastrous famine, which has so far been glossed over by the mass media. Without a clear understanding of the condition, the efforts of those trying to help alleviate the problem would hardly be successful.

So far, what we have all heard is only the government's version of the story. For instance, to anyone who wants to know why this fact was hidden for so long, the newspapers seem to offer no satisfactory answer. As an Ethiopian, I feel obliged to expose the developments which have led to the suffering of millions in that part of the world. Here are the facts:

1. Ethiopia acquired its present boundaries only by the end of the last century. It was not a voluntary

unity of nationalities, but one that was imposed by the Shoan regime. With the collapse of the late Emperor Haile Silassie's regime in 1974, the people hoped that the century-old discrimination and oppression would come to an end. Unfortunately, however, conditions remained unchanged. National liberation organizations claiming to represent their respective nationalities vowed to overthrow the regime and gain their political rights by force. The result has remained a deadlock which could not be solved militarily by Black Africa's largest army, 300,000 strong (and 17,000 Cuban soldiers and 3,000 Russian advisors).

2. Failing to solve political problems by military means, the Ethiopian government has for long been using food as a weapon. Eritrea, Tigray and Oromo have witnessed the most barbarous attacks (burning of crops, the killing of cattle in large numbers and also the poisoning of water wells) for so many years. This is reflected in the dis-

placement of people from their homes in quite large numbers. In fact, Ethiopians are the single largest number of refugees in the world, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) annual report.

3. Moreover, the Ethiopian government has until recently been extremely successful in keeping the world totally ignorant of the famine. Any aid that happened to arrive in Ethiopia was either distributed to the army or diverted to the U.S.S.R. (as was the case of the ship that was loaded with grain from a western nation in mid-1983—an action which led the British government to send aid through other means than Addis Abeba).

One of the most crucial questions that has not been answered by the media is whether the regime has effective control over all the regions of Ethiopia. It is an open secret that it does not control more than 15% of Eritrea and Tigray (with a population of 7-8 million). Even in the areas where it has effective control, the regime has been preventing many peasants from getting food just because they don't have government I.D. cards. Unless an effort is made to reach these people by the international organizations involved in relief efforts, 85% of the 7-8 million people in northern Ethiopia would be affected far more than they are now.

Besides, the Ethiopian government has recently tried to airlift the people in the refugee camps to the south. To we Ethiopians, the move is nothing but a way of breaking the resistance of the people and try to use them as a defence against the Somalis and the Oromos (who are waging a war against the regime). No one can expect the opponents of the regime in northern Ethiopia to keep silent when 250,000 people are transferred to a slaughter house. And if the current ceasefire is broken, the Ethiopian government would only close the doors to relief agencies in the hope of starving the people to submission.

Fortunately, however, there are ways and means of reaching the truly needy people where the government has no control. Those are the forgotten people dying by the thousands every day in the mountains of the north (especially Eritrea, Tigray and parts of Wollo). I don't mean that those are the only ones who need help, but I am trying to point out the fact that they are the ones who get the least, if any at all. I urge those involved in relief operation to consider this fact before it is too late. □

Tadisse A. Woldu is an Ethiopian student at Dalhousie University.

## Abbie Hoffman & Jerry Rubin are really "misleaders"

To the editors,

At a cost of thousands of dollars of students' funds the Dalhousie Student Union is hosting a fraudulent debate between so-called "leaders of the youth movement of the 60's", Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. While receiving much media hype, they are best described as misleaders, and were no better than their successors.

Anti-working class and anti-Marxist, they presented "youth as a class" to confuse and mislead democratic and progressive elements of the day. They created a false split between the young and the old, between youth and workers, which disrupted the mass movement. They promoted drugs and decadence as "revolutionary" substituting aimless anarchism for principled politics under the leadership of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party. Was this not the greatest service to American imperialism?

Serious political people rejected them. Amongst youth and students the Internationalists fought and defeated them, advancing the cause of revolution and socialism, basing themselves on Marxism-Leninism and Canada's concrete conditions rather than New Leftism and American "student radicalism".

Now, the rich sing hosannahs that students have rejected the "student radicalism" of the 60's, no longer interested in democratic rights, opposing aggression, or progressive social change. But with the more serious situation of the 80's students are no longer interested in a token approach like student

power, student positions on boards, or lobbying officials to problems. Students are looking for a serious programme for solving the major problems of our day.

Students must vigorously reject the opportunist politics of U.S. imperialism as well as its fascist propaganda against the peoples of Central America, etc. These characters are brought onto the scene when the level of class struggle on campus is rising in order to spread confusion and block students from taking up Marxist-Leninist positions and programmes. Students should stop expropriation of funds for these Americans and throw them out.

Charles Spurr

## Protest fashion

To the editors:

Okay, you're a student and you want to protest for a cause. If you want to make a maximum impact you should dress in dark, conservative business clothes and behave in a dignified, undramatic fashion.

Wearing jeans, t-shirts, and especially something "radical" or "punk" (eg. combat boots, black leather) means that when politicians and Joe Canadian see you on T.V. or in the *Chronicle Herald* etc., they will label you "left-wing freaks, radicals" or the like and not take you or your cause seriously. Even worse the media focusses on the people or the dramatics as opposed to a serious in-depth look at the issues being raised.

People who go to protests because it's glamorous to be arrested for civil disobedience and amusing to be on the front page of a newspaper should realize how detrimental they are to their "cause".

Nairne Holtz

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## Gigeroff no longer joke

By DAVID OLIE

FOR A MAN ORIGINALLY elected as a joke candidate, Alex Gigeroff has learned the political game remarkably quick. Perhaps this is the ultimate statement of the political process among students: jokers do the best job as student leaders.

In all honesty, Alex and his Sancho Panza, Rusty James, have done a fairly creditable job in their positions. They have matured far beyond the two guys who spent four hours last spring in front of the SUB in pink bunny suits to fulfill a campaign promise. They have learned to take themselves and their mandate seriously.

Gigeroff, especially, plays the political game. Let us not underestimate the importance and difficulty of this game. As elected head of over 11,000 students, Alex faces the same problems as any other major politician. He has to mediate the vast and varied interests of all his constituents when they come in conflict with each other, and when they come in conflict with outside forces. He must be a

moderator, consequently he must be a moderate. This, for the average politician, is the essence of the political game.

In other words, there is no reason to think Gigeroff does not have the best interests of his constituents at heart.

However, once in a while a politician comes along who rises above the average, who leads the people rather than following them, who refuses to "play the game." This individual is of particular importance in a crisis, and a crisis is what Dalhousie now faces. The game is fine as long as the rules are in operation, but the rule book is out the window now.

Gigeroff is going to have to realize, soon, that the game is over and real leadership is now necessary. That is, leading the students' union to the side of the faculty union in its legitimate dispute with administration, to put an end to the dispute as soon as possible. Whether or not he is up to it remains to be seen.

A final word of warning to Mr. Gigeroff: medical studies have shown that excessive fence-sitting can lead to premature hemorrhoids.