

by Erin Goodman

With a provincial election just months away, residents of a Halifax public housing development are finding a few changes in their lives.

The tenants currently living in Uniacke Square, a family housing project located in the Gottingen Street area, are being asked to leave their homes temporarily, as a result of a \$7 million "regeneration" project announced by the three levels of government last year.

"Anything that's going on down here these days is political," says Valerie Carvery, President of the Uniacke Square

Tenants' Association. Since February 1987, Carvery has been fighting for a written agreement from the provincial government and its partners guaranteeing the rights of residents to return to their homes after completion of the project. So far, the provincial government has responded to tenants' concerns with threats to cancel the project entirely.

But Carvery is feeling more optimistic about securing a written guarantee from the province these days, due to recent shifts in policy concerning Uniacke Square residents. On Monday, Uniacke Square MLA Edmund Morris responded to pressure from the Tenants' Association,

announcing a change in policy that will allow youths over the age of 21 to remain with their parents in the family housing unit and residents over the age of 58 to continue living in the Square. Previously, when residents reached the age of 58, they were forced to move into retirement homes.

Carvery feels the slow response to residents' concerns stems from an underlying feeling that public housing tenants are second-class citizens. "There's not a rule for the rich and a rule for the poor," she says. "We should be treated equally."

The representative from the City of Halifax who sits on the

Public housing pressures

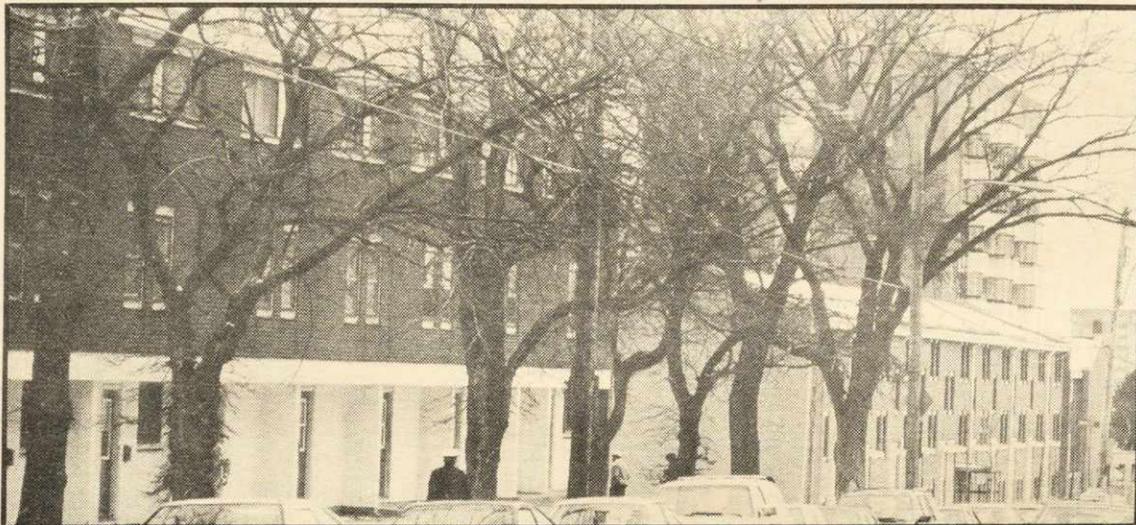


PHOTO: RUSS ADAMS

Uniacke Square residents are being treated to a "combination of paternalism and patronage" from the N.S. government.

steering committee for the regeneration is development worker Valerie Farmer-Carvery. She calls the policy change "a milestone for poor people". She says, "there's a whole new feeling in the Square."

She hopes the shift in policy is a reflection of attitude changes among politicians and administrators that will shed a positive light on the project. Most Uniacke Square residents have accepted the project grudgingly, obviously not trusting the government which forcibly removed Africville residents from their homes in 1968 to make way for the MacKay Bridge.

NDP Leader Alexa McDonough was a social worker assigned to the Africville Follow-up Project, and today she says she wants the provincial government to respect the rights of Uniacke Square residents. Calling the behaviour of Canadian Mortgage and Housing Minister Stewart McInnis and MLA Edmund Morris a "combi-

nation of paternalism and patronage", McDonough sees the resurgence of "sort of a 19th-century attitude about tenants who don't have any rights," and adds, "It's what happens when you're dealing with a consortium of government levels, rather than the people who live in that community."

Another group represented on the steering committee of the project is the Halifax Housing Authority, the "landlord" of Uniacke Square. The Housing Authority has been plagued with a number of resignations from the committee, starting with the resignation of original representative Stan Parsons over the summer. He was replaced by the newly-elected chair of the Housing Authority Jack MacIsaac, who was pulled off the board and replaced with Maude Lorde, a volunteer member of the Housing Authority. Lorde is a resident of Uniacke Square, and a former President of the Tenants' Association. It's not clear why the Housing Authority has decided

to let a volunteer represent its concerns on the committee.

Just last week, the most recent General Manager of Halifax Housing, Bernard Allard, resigned suddenly. No explanations have been offered to the press.

Mike Birtles, Regeneration Manager for Uniacke Square, is the "Federal link" on the steering committee. He's currently the General Manager of the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation, the crown corporation that acts as the 75 per cent partner in public housing. As the head of the project, he cites some main priorities as being improvements in security at the Square, supervised play areas, policy changes that will enhance the lives of the residents, and structural improvements to the buildings. Birtles is confident that what's being done at the Square is right for the residents.

"I think the neighbourhood is going to be better for this," he says. "We're trying to work it through and do it the right way."

\$ OUCH! \$

by Ariella Pahlke

Last Sunday, the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) voted unanimously to hold a referendum regarding an increase in student fees.

DSU Treasurer Shane Feriancek proposed a six-dollar-per-student increase. Five dollars would go toward general income for operations, fifty cents to the Pharos Yearbook, and fifty cents for course evaluation.

"Our surplus is totally wiped out," says Feriancek. "In 1984/85, the Union had a surplus of approximately \$250,000, which presently has been eroded to a deficit of approximately \$26,000."

The large deficit this year is mostly due to unexpected costs from taxes and the Pharos Yearbook. Also, when fees for CKDU, the Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) and course evaluation

totalling \$11,000 were added four years ago, the DSU decreased the operating fees of the Union by 10 per cent.

"If those operating fees hadn't been decreased, we wouldn't have had any problems," said Feriancek.

"Now we don't have the time to avoid the fee increase because there is no longer any surplus."

Feriancek said the Student Union has to have a surplus in order to be financially independent from the university. "If we don't have one, it really infringes on our autonomy," he says.

Now the DSU has two options, says Feriancek. The DSU must either increase the student fees or make major cuts in services, student jobs, full-time jobs and entertainment.

"We should be increasing our services, not decreasing them," says Feriancek.

Federation of students

Taking action

by Tony Tracy

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) is working harder than ever in its capacity as a lobbying group to forward the interests of students.

Tony Macerollo, CFS Chairperson, was in Halifax recently to meet with the students' unions of the various Halifax-area universities. While meeting at Dalhousie, he told student councillors "the environment has been changing with regard to post-secondary education (PSE)". Public policy discussions have been started up by the federal government on the issue of PSE, and more "routes of communication are opening between the students and the MPs," according to Macerollo.

Macerollo cited a number of issues which CFS has been concentrating on over the past year. Among these are the issues of tuition fees, the student loan system, transfer payments for post-secondary education paid by the federal government to each provincial government, and the federal summer job program for students.

According to Macerollo, CFS has been advocating a complete end to the current student loan system, and its replacement with a full bursary of grant system. Loans, says Macerollo, are a

deterrent to access rather than an encouragement." The federal government must realize "in most cases the parents do not make a necessary substantial contribution to the student's post-secondary education," he says. "The assumptions which were in place years ago do not apply today."

A full grant system would provide universal access to all Canadians, and financial constraints would not have to be a concern when a student is making the decision of whether or not to pursue education at the post-secondary level. CFS also feels the current summer job program does not do much better at actually addressing the needs of the students. Macerollo points out that the average student employed last summer through the Challenge '87 program earned \$2100 which is barely enough to live on over the summer, much less survive on for the full academic year.

Macerollo also addressed the issue of "transfer payments" paid by the federal government to the provincial governments to fund PSE. He suggested these funds are being abused and used irresponsibly by the provincial governments, who in some cases are actually spending less on education than they are receiving in transfer payments.

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