

the Dalhousie Gazette

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The **Dalhousie Gazette**, Canada's oldest college newspaper, is a weekly publication of the Dalhousie Student Union members and is a founding member of the Canadian University Press.

The views expressed in the **Dalhousie Gazette** are not necessarily those of the Dalhousie Student Union, the editor, or the collective 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 articles and letters-to-the-editor is noon on Monday. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be typed double-spaced. Advertising copy must be submitted by the Friday preceding publication.

Our office is located on the third floor of the Student Union Building. Our mailing address is the **Dalhousie Gazette**, Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S., B3H 4J2, telephone (902) 424-2507.

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The Gazette's weekly staff meetings are now at 5:30 every Thursday.

Editorial

Is Dal an island?

If you've been making good use of that \$2.69 of your student fees that goes to the Gazette and read the paper regularly, you've noticed the little idiosyncrasies of coverage that occur. Sure, we cover some things more than others. But one topic we've looked at for a while is student activism, or the lack of it, today.

From the feature on Université de Moncton's occupation last spring, to coverage of the screw-ups that was the march to the Legislature, to the hassles and arguments between our provincial student organization and the national group; we've given it a priority because only through effective student activism will our educational system be safe for ourselves, our brothers and sisters, and our children.

So what? Well, if you don't care about stuff like the need for an education everybody can afford now and in the future, you're not going to be convinced here. You can return to the closet you've conned yourself into inhabiting. This is written for the others who are even slightly worried about what's going on.

Dal is a member of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), our national student organization. Four dollars of your fees goes towards that membership. Dal students voted to join CFS last spring, presumably because they wanted to be part of what looked like a powerful, efficient national student organization that could get things done other than idle talk and rhetoric to the wrong people.

So far it hasn't worked out quite like that.

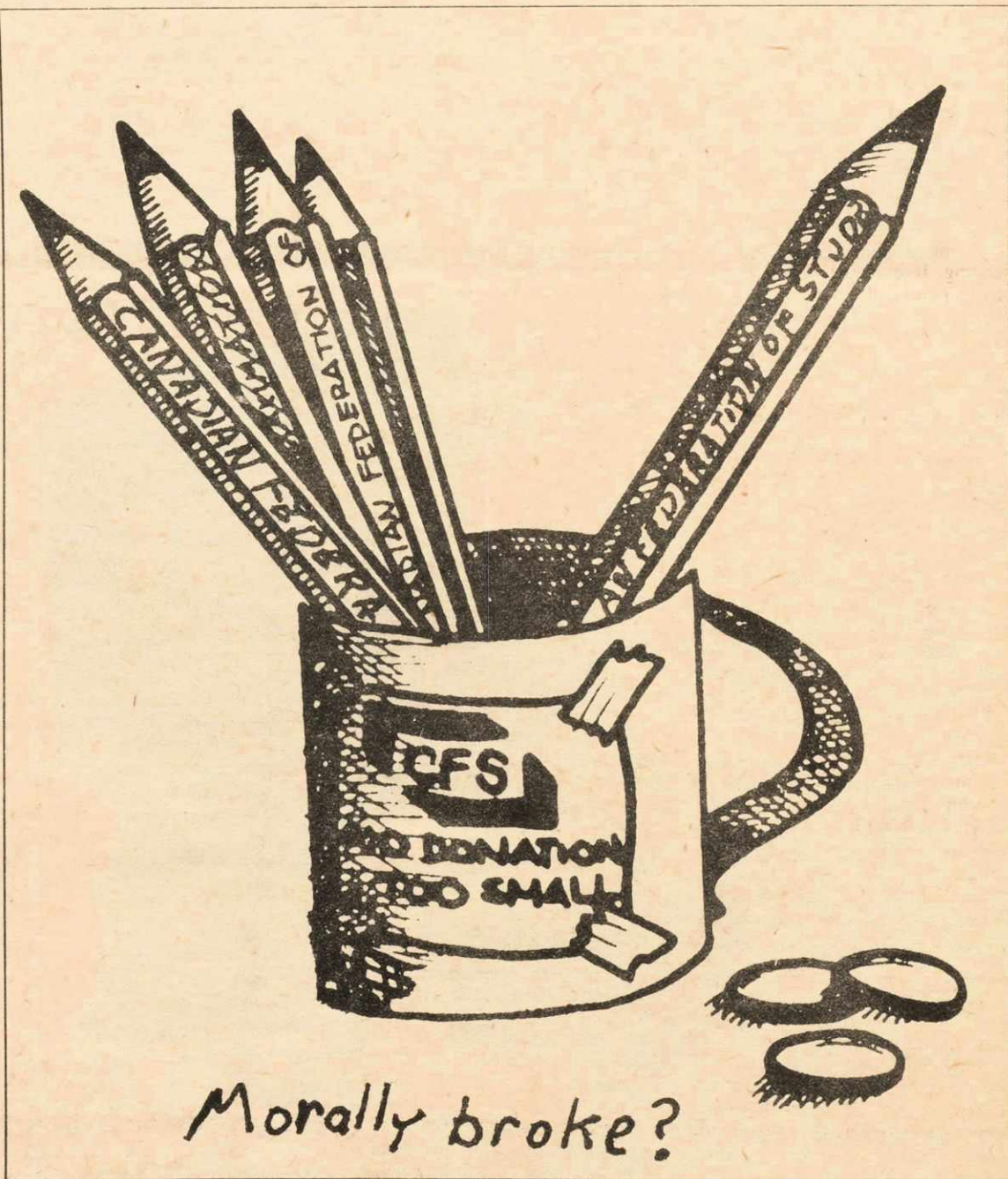
Everybody involved in student politics knew CFS would be slow starting up, but nobody even halfways expected the washout that was this year. If you heard about CFS this year, it was chance or the Gazette which lucked you into the name. It is true that a national student organization is really meant to lobby and get media support on a national level. But CFS has been no big banana there - supplying ye basic quotes but not really *pushing* any.

CFS failed repeatedly on even the most basic of levels. A national petition called to support the students at Université de Moncton was never organized. Their "Week of Information" did nothing on campuses and provinces save inform people there wasn't anything going on. And now they're telling the Student Unions of Nova Scotia (SUNS) if they want to stay part of CFS they're going to have to kick out Acadia and St. F.X. because they aren't CFS members. Acadia and St. F.X. weren't gaining by staying outside this national group and staying in SUNS, but it's doubtful they'd ever join CFS now that threats are coming down from the national CFS conference.

One final nasty note: If CFS is supposed to be doing the job of lobbying and spreading media attention on student issues, how come no national news coverage of the CFS Victoria conference last week?

With SUNS likely moving to pull out as well as SMU and NSCAD, it may seem inevitable CFS will be thrown off Dalhousie campus. But consideration should be give to how we could try to change this liability that CFS is into an asset.

If Dal leaves CFS, and CFS crumbles into nothingness (although it would take many more departures to finish CFS), Canada has no national student organization of *any* kind. It could take years to organize another common front, and years on top of that for anyone to take them seriously.



Amid this tidal current of CFS-hate, we should consider whether or not we'd be hurting ourselves more by leaving than we would be by staying. Within CFS, Dalhousie may have some chance of changing the organization. Maybe we should frown and bear it, forking over another four dollars next year rather than cutting ourselves off and precluding the idea of change.

But if there is a referendum and people vote to pocket that four bucks in fees, I wouldn't blame them. That's the real shame.