

DSA opposes N.S. wage constraint policy

by C. Ricketts

The Dalhousie Staff Association is opposing the provincial government's decree to renegotiate its collective agreement by February 28.

The policy was declared in September, 1982 and affects most public sector unions in the province. Contracts expiring after September 15, 1982 must be negotiated for 1983-84 by the end of February at a maximum wage and benefit increase of six per cent. Unions failing to do so will face legislation to that effect.

In a December 7 vote, an overwhelming majority of DSA members said "no" to the government's wishes. With a 30 per cent turnout, DSA executive director Delphine du Toit thinks the vote was a good representation, as ballots numbered significantly more than members at most DSA general meetings. "This is a complex issue, and people may be a little leary of taking a stand," she said. But she felt members who voted had probably read material distributed to them and understood the issue.

"There are about eleven or twelve reasons why we shouldn't negotiate before February 28," said du Toit. The present collective agreement expires June 30 this year. According to labour legislation notice to negotiate a new contract does not have to be received by the employer until 60 days prior to expiration of the current agreement.

The DSA's main objection is the "government's heavy-handed

approach." In a December letter from the DSA president Ria Hodgson to Premier Buchanan, the provincial government is accused of intruding on the right to free collective bargaining as guaranteed in labour legislation. It states, "Government intervention in the relationship between a university and its employees is a significant intrusion..."

A further question is whether or not the DSA is a public sector union. Although the university is in part provincially funded, the DSA

consists of university-employed support staff. Hospital employees and teachers face the same status problem.

"We can't sit passively and concede the government was right," said du Toit. Two dangers of commencing contract negotiations before they are legally required are the risky nature of forecasting economic conditions even further into the future, and the danger a contract will merely be renewed on the same terms (maximum six per cent) should contract negotiations

in 1984 break down.

Du Toit feels the government is blaming the unions for inflation and is operating on the "feeble hope" of creating stability. "It's a faint-hearted attempt to control inflation rather than control the amount of money made available (to provincially funded organizations)," she said.

Because of the current economic situation, du Toit feels unions are not going to ask for 15 per cent increases because "they don't want to rock the boat". "There are other

means for the government to manipulate, she said. "We're prepared to make some sacrifices."

Although the policy is not legally binding, it is possible that the government will introduce legislation when it reconvenes in February. To counter this, a coalition of nearly all unions affected has been formed to stage a fight-back campaign and make the public more aware of the unions' dilemma. A conference for the coalition is scheduled for mid-February.

Author Thomas Hauser to speak

by Geoff Martin

Thomas Hauser, author of *Missing*, will be speaking at Dalhousie University on Tuesday, January 25 with a showing of the 1982 film version of his book.

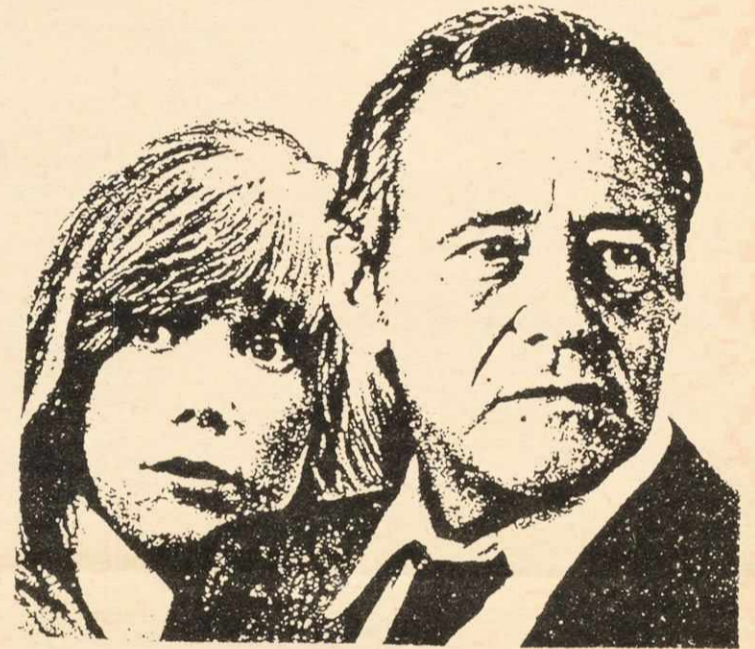
Hauser has recently achieved overnight fame with the paperback release of *Missing* earlier this year and the success of the movie directed by Costa-Gavras and starring Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek.

The 36-year-old New York born lawyer first released *Missing* in 1978 under the title *The Execution of Charles Horman*. He was nominated soon after for a Pulitzer Prize. The book and film both allege the United States government ordered the execution of an American citizen, Charles Horman, to cover up its part in the September 1973 coup d'etat in Chile.

From 1971 to 1977, Hauser practised law in New York, occasionally journeying into the field of civil rights law. Most notably, he was involved in researching the shootings of students at Jackson State (Mississippi) and Kent State (Ohio) in 1970.

Since April 1977, Hauser has contributed regularly to the New York Times, New York Magazine, the American Lawyer, Penthouse, McCall's and numerous other publications. Since *Missing*, he has published *The Trial of Patrolman Thomas Shea* (Viking, 1980) and a novel set in a Wall Street law firm -- *Ashworth and Palmer* (William Morrow, 1981).

The film and Hauser's remarks are sponsored by the Dalhousie Student Union and the Office of Community Affairs.



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