

"Honest broker" Canada plays host to...

# Cuba conference

by Paul Beasy

The Cubans are coming to Nova Scotia.

In an unprecedented conference, thirty years of Cuban history will be reviewed. From November 1-4, all aspects of modern Cuban society and its impact on the world will be discussed. The conference is a joint Dal, SMU and MSVU undertaking.

The organizer, Professor John Kirk of the Dalhousie Department of Spanish called the conference a forum for opinions on Cuban affairs since Fidel Castro's takeover in 1959.

Kirk said Canada's reputation as "honest broker" helps create a "balanced perspective" on Cuban affairs and makes it the ideal country to host the conference. Because of the United States' distaste for Castro, the conference could not be held in Washington or Havana.

The conference is being billed as the first opportunity ever to develop a balanced view of Cuba, everything from Castro's reaction to the USSR's new policy of *Perestroika*, to coverage of Cuba in North American newspapers will be examined.

The conference will feature over forty seminars and panel discussions by academics from all over the world to be held at the Sheraton Hotel. Films about and from Cuba, by directors such as Saul Landau and Tomas Gutierrez Alea, will be shown at the Art College. As well, a photography exhibit and a concert including what Kirk describes as the "very danceable Cuban music" of Grupo ORU, will be held at Saint Mary's.

The seminar and discussion series should prove to be the most interesting and informative part of the conference. They will include "170 leading specialists

from a variety of ideological perspectives."

Organization of this event has been extensive and, other than a minor problem in funding which turned out to be only a temporary loss of papers and not political subterfuge, the conference will go as planned.

The extent of the organization can be best described by the recent reaction of the organizers of a joint Havana-Moscow-Washington conference on the Cuban missile crisis held in 1987. They were surprised by the number of specialists on Cuba that will be in attendance here in Halifax.

Kirk said there has "never been a conference like this and probably never will be again," here in Halifax.

The aim of the conference, according to Kirk is to look at Cuba in a new light covering human rights, women, blacks and Cuba's relations with the USSR and the world. All this is to help re-assess the country on the 30th anniversary of the revolution.

Over 800 people from all over the world are expected to attend. The registration fee for students has been kept to a low \$30 for the full package. The concert at SMU including Grupo ORU and Halifax's own Four the Moment is only \$4.

If "things Cuban" appeal to you, this is the event to attend. For more information, check the posters around the campus and the city.



## NDP candidates advocate free education

OTTAWA (CUP) — Audrey McLaughlin says post-secondary education should be free to students.

The Yukon MP, one of seven candidates for the federal New Democratic Party leadership said Sweden was a good model for Canada to follow for post-secondary education.

Post-secondary education is free there, she said at an all candidates meeting in Ottawa last week. "We probably aren't at that point right now," McLaughlin warned.

She said she would restore public funding for research and development. McLaughlin said universities are too closely tied to industry for R & D funding.

Former British Columbia Premier Dave Barrett said Australia has the best education system in the Commonwealth.

Students in Australia repay part of the cost of their education in the form of extra taxes after graduating. While the system used to be free, the government has recently reintroduced tuition fees.

"It's really expensive to put into place," said Ontario Federation of Students official Greg Elmer. "It's basically a loan system anyway."

Barrett said when he was premier in B.C., his government decentralized universities and

community colleges to increase access. That should happen nationally, he said.

Port Moody-Coquitlam MP Ian Waddell said the federal government should be more stringent in insuring that transfer payments to the provinces intended for education are not spent elsewhere.

Essex-Windsor MP Steven Langdon, a former professor at Carleton, went further than Waddell and said the federal government should grant direct funding to universities.

He tied funding to access, saying that without funding, "access to university education is going to become increasingly restricted to the rich."

Windsor-Lake St. Clair MP Howard McCurdy said R & D funding should be doubled over the next two years. McCurdy, the only candidate who mentioned education while speaking to the audience, noted Canada spends 1.3 per cent of its GNP on research, ranking it sixth among the seven industrialized nations.

McCurdy also called for a National Advisory Council on Education, to be funded by federal and provincial governments and private enterprise.

The council, which would operate at arms-length from the government, would set the priorities and direction for education in Canada, he said.

## TRUTH. DO PROFESSORS DEAL WITH IT?

Come and discuss this with:

- \* **Stephen Burns (Associate Professor of Philosophy)**  
- Discussion Chair
- \* **Terri Euloth (Third year Commerce student)**
- \* **Robert Boutilier (Associate Professor of Biology)**
- \* **John Flint (Professor of History)**
- \* **Lale Kesebi (Honours student in Psychology)**  
and
- \* **Bessa Whitmore (Assistant Professor of Social Work)**

At the second session of

### The Deans' Fall Forum on Undergraduate Education

Monday, October 30th, 3:00 to 5:00 pm.  
The Seminar Lounge, Henson College