

Union must strengthen itself

by Tony Kelly

As the CUPE Strike ages it is possible to offer a bit of constructive critical commentary. In fact criticism of the strike is in order if for no other reason than the Administration of Dalhousie appears not to be incurring much loss due to the strike. The Administration is capable of and willing to freeze the workers out over Christmas and will perhaps return to the bargaining table with a firm 30 cent+ offer. If the Union does not take immediate steps to strengthen itself CUPE will be forced to accept the University's meagre offer. This will happen despite the willingness and enthusiasm of a large support committee and the largest demonstration against the Administration the campus has seen since the 1960's. Support for the Strike is growing but the garbage is moving, classes are happening, the Engineers are doing their work as usual, and CUPE workers are getting colder. What then is the strike doing?

The strike is causing a fair amount of inconvenience for about 70 management scabs who are being well paid to do the work of CUPE, annoyance to some huge Shore garbage trucks, and quite possibly a bit of overtime for the Halifax Police and the RCMP photographers as they are repeatedly called in to intimidate the Union. The CUPE workers' morale is high but the success of the strike remains limited. As long as this remains true the morale of the workers has no where to go but down. What then should the strike be doing?

The university is a work place and with the exception of management personnel all other employees of the university are in fact workers. In an

era of increased fiscal restraint and massive social service cutbacks even the Faculty has had to recognize this. The proof of this rests in the fact that the Faculty has recently adopted the traditional defence of the working

not managed to disrupt the normal operation of the university. Why and what is to be done?

To date the Union has adopted a strategy of simply gaining public sympathy for

and off the campus. The only way to prevent this is to stop the trucks at the picket lines. This will not happen until such time as the Union refuses to be intimidated by the police and the ever present threat of a court injunction to prevent

out of fear of alienating students and from a sense that the other bargaining units on campus might not unanimously support the strike. However if the call were made to respect the pickets it is already evident that a fair number of employees and students would respect the lines and would struggle with their colleagues to do the same. Doubtless this would create sufficient political pressure on the Administration to force them back to the bargaining table. In any case the hard political support for the strike would begin to take on such proportions as to bring this about.

To conclude, it should be emphasized that the workers have a right to a living wage. What is needed to bring this about is a concerted strategy on the part of CUPE aimed at significantly disrupting the workplace in order to force the administration to concede to the union. No amount of sympathy can serve as a substitute for the call to hard acts of support against the administration to help win the workers' demands. The right to strike after all was not won because people felt sorry for the workers. It was won through hard struggle and solidarity on the part of all workers. Unity and struggle will win the day. Pity and fear will reduce CUPE's right to strike to meaningless rubble in the dust bin of Dalhousie's labor history.



Over 300 people attended a rally in support of the strikers last Friday. The demonstrators congregated in front of the Arts and Administration building and sang a song dedicated to the University Administrators that have been scabbing throughout the strike.

class—the union. But the union in and of itself is not a sure guarantee that the rights of employees to a living wage and decent work conditions will be met. Ultimately the union is only as powerful as its ability to aggressively organize a sufficient disruption of the normal operation of the work place in such a way as to force the employer to meet the just demands of the union. This is normally done through the union's ultimate weapon—the strike (the complete withdrawal of the workers' labor power). CUPE has played its trump card but has

the strike with no clear cut strategy to channel existing sympathy into concrete actions of support which could pressure the administration into meeting CUPE's demands. The Union has relied heavily on an anti-scab campaign aimed largely at the DSA and students in an effort to encourage innocent scabs to stop being used as tools of the administration. However this campaign misses the essential point which is that the real Scabs are paid employees of the University and/or people who are under contract to move goods and services on

picketing. CUPE is one of the largest unions in the country and could certainly be expected to absorb any legal fees incurred due to the workers' actions in their legal strike. This is not meant to suggest violence on the picket lines but does suggest that the union must strengthen itself in the face of the state forces the administration will bring to bare against the union.

Finally, the Unions' strategy has been to gain sympathy as an end in itself and as a result CUPE has not asked the other employees of the university to respect the picket lines. Hence no significant disruption of the work place has occurred. The failure to make the request seems motivated

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referred us to a well known urologist in Halifax. We were well aware of the seriousness of our decision, and were acting on the assumption that the operation was irreversible. We have been married for three years, have neither children, nor the desire to have any. A vasectomy was chosen on the merit of its relative simplicity, reliability, as well as a desire on my husband's part to allocate birth control as his responsibility.

Both of us went to see the urologist, and were not in his office for more than three minutes when he flatly refused to perform the operation. He had made his decision before even speaking with us. His explanation was simply that WE were too young, and WE may change our minds about having children at a later date. He also described how he had performed operations on several other men my husband's age who had now changed their minds and were taking their wrath out on him.

I could have accepted his decision on that basis, but then, the urologist turned to me and asked why I did not

have a tubal ligation. Apparently, he felt my husband and all other men his age were not capable of making such an important decision about their own bodies. This is obviously nothing but blatant discrimination, since I could be placed on the waiting list for a tubal without any difficulty.

When I told my physician of the urologist's decision, she contacted other urologists in the area, resulting in the same answer, NO WAY. Vasectomies are definitely frowned upon for young men.

Surely in a world so full of discrimination against women, this cannot possibly mean that women are capable of making a decision which will greatly affect their lives, but men are not.

This issue has now become a moral one. I can have a tubal, but refuse. We will wait until a logically liberated urologist comes along, or at least one who will hold off a decision until speaking with both of us.

My comment on the lecture: Pros and Cons, MY ASS!!
Sincerely,
Roseanne Armitage

Reader upset

To the Gazette:

Yes, the topic of the day is once again the strike. As I read the "Strike Bulletin" issued by the "Dal Strike Support Committee", I see that they are urging us, the student body, to picket for the strikers.

Picket? Oh I remember! We did that last year in protest against tuition increases. I can see you remember too. How upset we all were!!
Sharon MacDonald

Gazette pro-literati?

To the Gazette:

A brief but minor point regarding "Fit To Be Tied"; Wally Stephen was showing himself clearly as an unlet-

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the Dalhousie Association of Psychology Students and

TNT

Thursday Night Theatre present:

BADLANDS

Martin Sheen
Sissy Spacek

Thurs. Nov 30

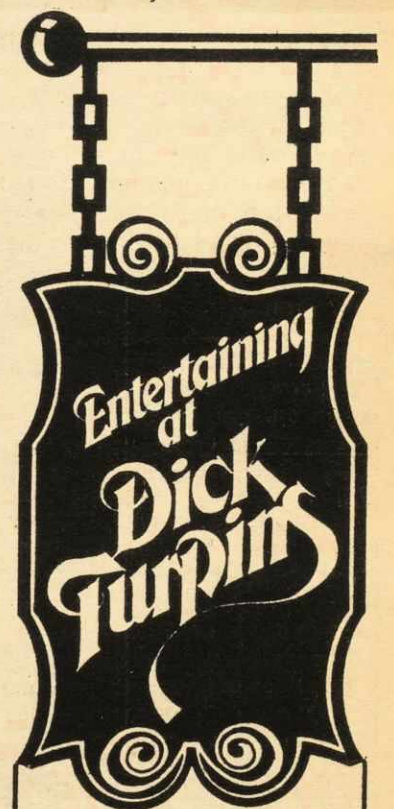
Rm 2815

Life Sciences Bldg.
7:00 and 9:15

Adm \$1.49 \$1.00 for DAPS members

THIS WEEK: Nov 23

DARK STAR



this week and next

SLANEY

CP Hotels &
Chateau Halifax