

NS students protest March: "Underfunding under John"

By Erin Goodman

HALIFAX (CUP) — When 200 students marched to the Nova Scotia legislature October 27 to protest underfunding, they found that Premier John Buchanan's government had locked them out.

"We weren't allowed on the grounds of province house today," Dalhousie student council president external Lara Morris told the students crowding against the fence which surrounds the legislative building. "We called the office four times to talk to the minister of higher education and training, who also happens to be our premier, and he wouldn't talk to us."

Inside the legislature, a weekly cabinet meeting was being held.

Morris was told by the premier's office that a new policy banning public demonstrations on the grounds had been set the week before. The order apparently came from the premier's press secretary.

A rally was held on the sidewalk outside the fence bordering the legislature, with an overflow of students from Dalhousie, Mount Saint Vincent University and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design spilling out on to the street. A handful of students from Acadia University in Wolfville travelled across the province to take part.

The march, organized by the Dalhousie University student council and endorsed by the provincial Young New Democrats, protested what many students are calling the systemic underfunding of post-secondary education in the province.

Although provincial NDP leader Alexa McDonough and a recently-appointed education critic from the Liberal Party were present, no Conservative representative appeared.

McDonough said that Tory Premier Buchanan appeared to be "thumbing his nose at students."

She apologized on behalf of members of the legislature "embarrassed" by Buchanan's refusal to allow student access to the grounds. "John Buchanan and his new Tories need to be reminded that the Nova Scotia legislature doesn't belong to them."

Also present at the march were members of the Dalhousie staff and faculty associations.

The crowd's high-spirits weren't dampened by news that the Dalhousie Faculty Association had rejected a proposal for binding arbitration from university administrators the night before.

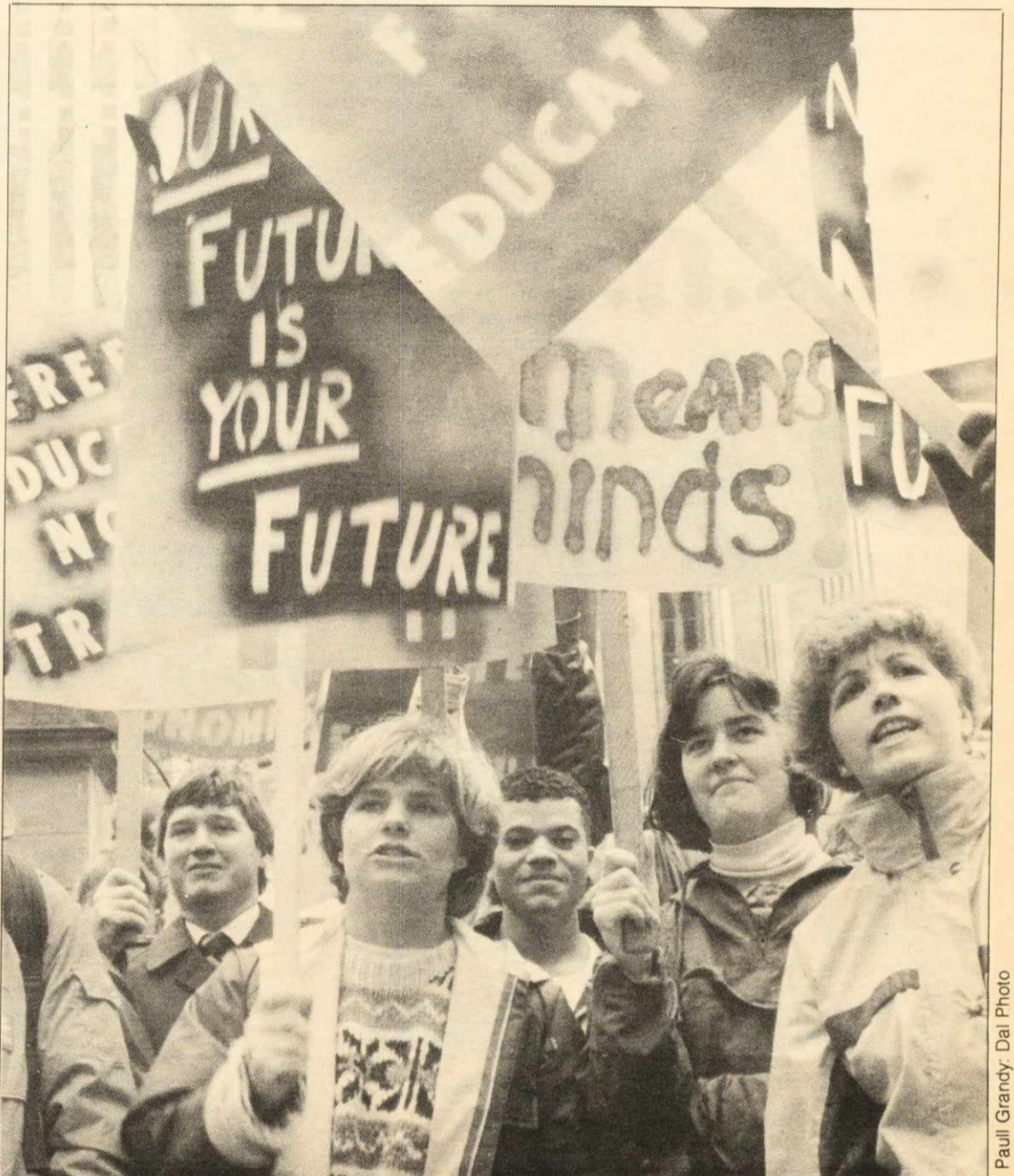
"(They) did not make a serious proposal," said DFA president David Williams. "They propose a lengthy, complicated, unworkable process before we even go to arbitration."

Legal costs for the faculty association have risen to \$46,000-a-day during negotiations. The faculty is in a legal strike position on November 4, and according to Williams, "This time, people are serious."

"The faculty is at the end of its rope. We cannot allow Nova Scotia universities to continue to deteriorate."

Said Acadia University student council president Chris Van Buskirk: "All Nova Scotia universities are underfunded and disadvantaged compared to other universities across the country. The government must step in now."

Acadia student Rick Gates is running as an independent in the November 21 federal election, on a platform of post-secondary education issues.



Paul Grandy: Dal Photo

Radical students gathered outside Province House last week to protest government underfunding of post-secondary education.

Quebec students on strike

By Chris Lawson

MONTREAL (CUP) — Quebec college students put down pens and picked up placards October 26 as a three-day province-wide student strike began.

More than 100,000 students at 32 colleges walked out of classes. The strikers are demanding reforms to Quebec's 20-year-old loans and bursaries system.

The protest was organized by the province's student lobby group, l'Association nationale des etudiants et etudiantes du Quebec (ANNEEQ). It wants the provincial government to make part-time students and those living away from home eligible for financial aid.

About 123,000 Quebec students receive cheques from the government's \$250 million program.

Classes were cancelled at 26

CEGEPs and students set up picket lines in front of 10 colleges the first day. Only about 30 students at Champlain Regional College in Lennoxville closed the student-run cafeteria.

No universities have joined the strike. Universite de Sherbrooke, Concordia and McGill students

voted against the strike at poorly-attended general assemblies.

ANEEQ leaders have asked to meet with Quebec education minister Claude Ryan before deciding on extending the strike indefinitely. No meeting time has been confirmed yet, and Ryan's office did not return calls.

Supporting the DFA is supporting your education.

Crossing picket lines isn't.

March with the faculty on Friday the 4th.

Meet on the corner of Coburg and LeMarchant at 1:15 p.m.

Get it on your chest!



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