

## Thoughts on Commitment

Up to now, the hiring policy has been unclear with regards to what has been called 'commitment to Dumont'. Recent discussions have identified this 'commitment' as in some ways a political direction (toward socialism) and yet there have been committed socialists who were not committed to Dumont, and people who quickly developed a commitment which was their only overt commitment to socialism. What it feels like to be committed to Dumont (for me) is to constantly be concerned with all aspects of Dumont, especially the direction Dumont is taking in community life.

It also requires a realization that Dumont cannot be related to in the same way as a straight job, for the structures set up at Dumont are always tentative, and people must realize the shortcomings of these structures. This last point means that in the short run people must maintain a personal flexibility, to make up for immediate problems, and in the long run to participate in the constant revision of those structures, seeing them as guidelines to people's activity.

Commitment cannot be measured in terms of the amount of time put into Dumont--I think there are people who fulfill their commitment with a minimum amount of time above and beyond their scheduled shifts. Commitment cannot be measured by the number of committees a person is on--that only measures the power a person is seeking (that's a bit crude)! And yet commitment must be evaluated for it is, I think, a crucial factor in the history of Dumont--for committed people have been solely responsible for any developments that have taken place at Dumont. And if we are to discuss what an employee can do for Dumont, that invariably comes down to a question of commitment (assuming that people who cannot do the 'routine' work get filtered out by some other process.)

Then there is the other question: part of the social function of Dumont. What can Dumont do for its employees? This has been the reason for the-hiring of several people in the past two years: people who can't hack straight jobs, people trying to exist while sorting out their personal lives, people looking for friends, etc. Dumont has been able to give, to a limited extent, support to these people, because most people at Dumont are sensitive people. I cannot minimize the shop's role in dealing with this, for the above reasons are a large part of why I came back to Dumont.

But I do think that, for whatever reason people came to Dumont, they should be constantly re-examining their role within Dumont, and Dumont's role in their lives. For if either both are not progressing but stagnating, then perhaps they are not for Dumont, Dumont not for them.

The question of particular individuals' activity in Dumont has become an important topic of discussion in relation to hiring; what do we expect of potential employees in terms of benefit to Dumont and benefit to the employee. The unfortunate situation is that all of the applicants fulfill one or both of the categories admirably--making selection of one individual rather difficult.

But this problem is dually compounded by the feeling, on the part of certain individuals, that some of the present employees are neither making full use of Dumont in the resolving of their personal problems nor contributing fully to the shaping of Dumont into a viable force of social change within Canada and Kitchener-Waterloo (keeping in mind that there are many ways in which an individual can contribute, as well as many ways in which an individual can benefit).

For example: one question the hiring committee discussed was the male-female roles in the shop. It is apparent that there has been a considerable breakdown of the sharing of

tasks between the sexes. This has had the unfortunate effect of men taking more than their share of power. The way that this has come about is through the lack of women willing to take initiative: not getting their chauffeur's license, not being a leading force in committee work, as well as several other areas in which the relationship to Dumont is more intricate. Rather than pushing women into these roles, at the least sign of resistance, power-hungry men have jumped into action.

This leads to ugly situations: six men and one woman going to the Hogtown conference, Women's Press constantly having to deal with men, Twin Cities acting in a chauvinist way when women show up to pick-up jobs done there. And it also leads to a fairly ugly (in terms of liberated attitudes) question in relation to hiring: what ratio of men-to-women is required at Dumont to make sure that women are sharing equally (read men are allowing the equal) participation in all areas of work done at Dumont?

Similarly, I sometimes find myself taking on more work than I feel I want to, simply because no one else wants to. How many 'committed' people are needed at Dumont before the workload can be comfortably handled during working hours by everyone?

Should we be hiring committed people because they will help alleviate the too-heavy workload of others? Should we be hiring 'strong women' so that women will have more of a voice in the affairs of Dumont? Or should either of these be considerations when the basic problem resides with the present employees--hiring to remedy those problems is only a simple way of avoiding the issue altogether.