

Dal votes "yes" to

Radical course for CUS

Editor's Note: The Gazette will be printing in future issues many of the policies adopted by the CUS Congress last week. The first of these, part of the Student Power Resolution, appears on this page.

The annual Congress of the Canadian Union of Students at Guelph last week marked a major step in the development of a significant Canadian student movement.

Delegates from forty Canadian universities, including 6 from Dalhousie, spent seven days hammering out policy statements on many of the major problems in Canadian society and in Canadian universities, and discussed implementation of student demands.

The first two days of the Congress saw an attempt at revolt by some of the Western and all of the Maritime universities, who claimed inability to pay the new \$1 per student levy of the National Union, and who wanted CUS to adopt a regionalized structure.

By the evening of the second day this potentially terminal revolt had been quieted by the compromise "Regina Manifesto", which placed permanent fieldworkers in each of the four regions, B.C., Prairies, Ontario, and the Maritimes, and democratized the

National Council.

Ten Universities, Mount Allison, Waterloo U.C., U. of Bathurst, U. of Moncton, Notre Dame U., U. of Ottawa, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, U. of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon), St. Patrick's College and Saskatchewan (Saskatoon), St. Patrick's College, and University of New Brunswick, who had hoped to sue the Union for more concessions, or were still unsure of their ability to pay the national levy, then withdrew.

Typical of the comments made by universities withdrawing were those of a delegate from U. of Bathurst, who said he felt that policies were dictated "from the top down", and of Saskatoon S.U. President Eric Olson, who claimed "A vocal minority committed to leftist dogma has refused to hear opinions not in harmony with their own."

Probably the most unusual of the withdrawals was that of U.N.B., whose President, David Cox, announced that he was going to return home to try to break down all the structures of his student union, hope-

fully to form a voluntary association thereafter.

CUS President Peter Warran, noting that the letters of withdrawal implied resentment of the policies he had proposed, offered to resign, but a motion of confidence in him was approved almost unanimously by the Congress, with the University of King's College abstaining.

With most of the procedural problems settled, five days of policy-making produced a number of important statements outlining demands on various important problems.

Education resolutions included proposals that member unions ensure that university employees are unionized; and condemned student scabbing and university power of expropriation over lands surrounding them. CUS declared its opposition to military research in the University, to tuition fees, and to contributions to the university by corporations and business, except if these are in the form of a capital gains tax.

The necessity of restructuring university government was outlined in a four point program:

"The Canadian Union of Students, in its effort to democratize the university, asserts that:

(I) Students must have effective control over all decision-making bodies in the university and that faculty and university employees should have adequate representation.

(II) other members of the above-mentioned bodies must be representative of all socio-economic strata.

(III) department heads must be elected by all members of the department concerned, including students, who should be eligible for this office as well.

(IV) All decision-making within the university must be open and any closed decisions must be publicly justified."

Member unions were called on to undertake a program aimed at the reform of the classroom situation, establish course unions to provide critical course evaluation, form experimental courses incorporating interdisciplinary and participatory approaches, support free schools, and encourage high school students to challenge authoritarianism in their education.

Recognizing the mounting problem of student housing, the National Union gave a high priority to expanding available facilities, and to bringing university residences under the control of the students living in them.

Student Power resolutions called for student control over all aspects of the university. They demanded student control of the classroom, and autonomous departmental committees to bargain with those presently in faculty hands. One resolution particularly relevant to the present stage of development of student power at Dalhousie called for "an end to all advisory committees of students without direct decision-making power, and to student participation as a minority of any decision-making group. Students must form their own committees, articulate their demands, and engage in bargaining with the administration and/or faculty controlled bodies."

Openness of meetings, equal access to information, and abolition of the Board of Governors were also demanded.

The most contentious resolution presented to the Congress called for recognition of Quebec's independence, a stronger national government for English Canada, and more power to municipalities. This was adopted by a slight majority, and caused a major rift in the Dalhousie delegation, some of whom, although agreeing with the intent of the motion, felt that as an action of an English-Canadian student union it was a negation of French Canada's self-determination.

The Vietnam resolution adopted condemns the American imperialist aggression and Canadian complicity, demands immediate withdrawal by the U.S. and her allies, and supports the National Liberation Front. CUS will invite NLF students to Canada, and Canadian students are urged to participate in the October Week of Concern.

These resolutions all reflect the new progressive attitude of Canadian student leaders, and are a call for the development of a strong, issue-oriented student movement in English Canada. Dalhousie leaders, if their actions at the Congress are to be taken as any indication, seem to have also adopted a progressive philosophy of leadership. With the definite exceptions of the Quebec resolution and the portion of the Vietnam resolution calling for support of the NLF, Dalhousie generally backed even the most radical of policies presented.

On the other hand, the student leaders of King's College unfortunately found themselves virtually isolated from the mainstream of Canadian student thought and at times seemed about to disengage themselves from collective action with students in the rest of Canada by withdrawing from the union.

CUS policy for classroom

The fundamental demand of student unions must be for control over the learning process and the university decision-making process at all levels. The basis for this control is not a belief that students constitute an elite, but the principle that control over one's material environment is a fundamental democratic right. We therefore must support the exercise of that right by other groups, be they workers in industry, urban residents, or citizens of the third world.

The university is not an autonomous community but a multiversity with a corporate structure and ideology training students according to the imperatives of the corporate business world. Thus the various disciplines and departments are becoming increasingly compartmentalized from one another and are more and more functionally related as training laboratories in technique to the narrow demands of the labour market. Stratification exists within both the faculty (lecturer, associate professor etc.) and the student body (honors versus majors etc.) and between them. The demand for control cannot be a request for participation in this corporate structure. It must seek to counter the power of the university as a corporation with the autonomous power of the students.

1. Department and classroom: organizing around places of intellectual work.

The most crucial arenas where the struggle for control must take place are the classroom and departmental decision-making bodies. Student demands in the classroom and department will mean conflict not only with the administration, but also with those faculty whose narrow academic interests, or whose real powers based on status or grading, are threatened by student power. Functionally, the faculty may normally be divided into three groups: upper administrators and deans, whose interests often coincide with those of the administration; middle-level academics, who are threatened by administrative interference but also by student demands; and the bloc of lower faculty and poorly-paid teaching assistants whose interests are closer to the students'. Students must, as a group, formulate their specific demands, and must unite with this third group of faculty, including minority faculty unions and teaching assistant unions, to fight for the following:

1. The CAUT policy of apprenticeship and tenure must be vigorously opposed as a guild professionalist concept of status

and power in the university which subordinates teaching to research and intellectual exchange to competition between professors and students in the classroom and departmental politics. We must fight for automatic due process in hiring and firing with regular review of contract by parallel student and faculty committees with mutual veto.

2. Students must have control in the classroom: methods to that end could be an adoption of the pass/fail system of grading, constant evaluation based on assignments, class participation, evaluation by fellow students in the class, and negotiation between the individual student and the teacher.

We recognize that this interim step (towards the end of abolition of exams and grades) does not fundamentally alter the power relationship between faculty and students insofar as it does not abolish grading per se. However, it is a system of grading which is capable of being more flexible in its application to individual students, and might serve to clarify the whole issue of grading.

There must also be continuous joint student/faculty control over curricula and teaching-learning processes.

Students must be organized to confront faculty-administration opposition to these reforms by boycotting exams, setting up student-run tutorials and seminars using resource personnel, challenging the bias of course outlines and the context of lectures, etc.

3. Autonomous student power must be built by establishing departmental union locals including all students in each department. Student committees, parallel to all departmental faculty committees, should be created to demand recognition of students' right to equal access to information and bargaining power. The department union, in the event of conflict, must work for final veto over departmental or faculty decisions, and must have the right to initiate new policies for faculty ratification.

4. Students will actively support the demands of university employees for control over their working environment.