

Positions of Honor

To The Editor:

On Jan. 25, 1965 Students' Council selected the Graduating Class Valedictorian and Historian. Mr. J. A. Brook was selected as Valedictorian and Miss Marilou Wells was selected Historian. While it would seem at first glance that these students were excellent choices I would point out that both individuals sit on Students' Council; Miss Wells as Vice-president and Mr. Brooks as Arts Rep.

It should be asked on what basis these selections were made, were no other student (of the graduating class) worthy, especially academically of these honors, are nominations taken from the graduating class at large, and finally, does the graduating class have any voice in the selections? The two positions are ones of great honor. I believe that those selected are good choices, however, I also am sure that this situation should be investigated, perhaps reorganization take place, and some timely questions answered.

Respectfully submitted
E. B. Monsma

TVC Praised

To The Editor:

This week the University of Alberta WUS Treasure Van Committee wound up its business after another highly successful year. Those of us who shop at the Treasure Van and who enjoy its unique collection of goods, owe a vote of thanks to Mr. Stephen Cox, his committee, and the hosts of volunteers, who organized and operated the Treasure Van in Edmonton.

As one who was able to observe closely the Treasure Van Committee in action, I have nothing but praise and admiration for Mr. Cox and his crew. I for one, no longer think that Treasure Van "just happens."

Sincerely,
Brian L. Evans

Hidden Meaning?

To The Editor:

The enclosure was clipped from *Weekend Magazine* of Jan. 23.

I have added two dots. These dots are eyes; eyes in two different faces, with long white noses and big wide-open mouths. (See it? It's a matter of changing "ground" to "figure".)

Maybe this new flag really, in reversed perception, represents Parliament.

Don't thank me!
Grad Psych.

Two-Edged Sword

To The Editor:

The editor—nameless to me—of the pamphlet erroneously dubbed "Common Sense" has struck again. This doughy warrior may well be called upon to prove that Mr. Manning is not acquainted—well acquainted—with that individual (St. John XIV, through XVII) whom Christ should send in the latter days.

On Friday of this week, in the rotunda of the Arts Building, U of A, the aforesaid editor felt the blows of a one-edged sword wielded by one who is just earning his spurs. Was there a mutual achievement of "touches?"

He will again, within the next few weeks, meet the same sword wielded by a French-Canadian gentleman who will be speaking to the University Law Club Forum. He would do well not to incense the wielder.

Also, he would do well to consider very carefully, whether he is willing to meet the wielder of the two-edged sword of the Revelation, should that sword be drawn from its scabbard—especially if the swordsman wears the favor of his bride.

These odd few remarks apply equally to his rivals for the laurels of scurrility whether "Inside" or just "Edge."

Outlaw of Sherwood Park

Staff-Student Relations

To The Editor:

The Executive of the Staff Association is prepared to encourage any responsible and scrupulous efforts to nourish meaningful dialogue between faculty-members and students. Among other things, "meaningful dialogue" implies the possibility of giving and receiving criticism without fear of misunderstanding and reprisal. We view the scheme of the Students' Union, as embodied in a letter and sample questionnaire recently mailed to most faculty-members, as an honest attempt to help put this kind of dialogue between faculty and students on one sort of regular, convenient, and useful footing.

As to the spirit of this enterprise: we think it is one of seeking for a mode of dialogue which both allows for frankness and also protects confidences and the rights of faculty as well as students. We agree that these are the points essential to the scheme's integrity: (1) that each faculty-member has, in the first place, complete freedom of choice to use or not to use the questionnaire; (2) that each year's crop of filled-in questionnaires remains inviolably private through all steps of the envisaged process; (3) That the filled-in questionnaires remain the personal property of each faculty-member—property that is not to be used for any other reason whatever besides his own edification and/or amusement. Any abuse of this private property, formally or informally, we should regard as a very serious breach of confidence indeed.

As to the sort of questions posed in the questionnaire: faculty opinion varies a good deal on the usefulness and relevance of some of them. No doubt the comments, which the students invited and which many faculty-members will have already made, are the fairest possible and most useful sort of questionnaire.

Ian Sowton
President, AASUAE

Student Syndicalism

A New Concept In Student Government

reprinted from
The Dalhousie Gazette
by Terry Morley

We may be at the beginning of a new era of student action in Canadian post-secondary educational institutions if our friends in Quebec continue to be successful in spreading the gospel of student syndicalism.

Student syndicalism is a French Canadian idea for turning student governments into dynamic organizations analogous to trade unions. University students form a union in order to gain recognition for themselves as legitimate members of society who fulfill the useful social role of learning.

The syndicate or union strives to gain for its members the privileges that go with full citizenship in a society, such as a vote, and the right to a decent living as "young intellectual workers."

At the same time, student syndicalists believe that students should use their collective power as a pressure group to help solve social problems unrelated to education. They feel, that even though it is necessary for any interest group to fight for better conditions for itself, it is also necessary for that interest group to recognize itself as an interdependent part of the total community. In this way, student syndicalists propose to make the voice of the student much more effective in the nation.

student role that of pure consumer

The theoretical construction of student syndicalism begins with a theory of the student. In Canadian universities, the present role of the student is that of pure consumer. He passively collects the masses of data dictated by his professors. Examinations do not evaluate the development of his creative potential but only his fidelity to the formal curriculum.

The student is not trained to transform the learning he consumes into something he can use in a socially responsible way. Therefore, he becomes alienated from his own studies, he is socially irresponsible, and hence he is rendered a dependent of society. The student depends on aid—state aid, private aid and family aid—for his existence. It is considered preferable to aid the student

rather than remunerate him for the work he does in his social role.

Our society does not recognize the student as having an integral part to play in the social cosmos, and prefers to treat him as a privileged parasite.

Essentially, student syndicalism stems from a basic rejection of this philosophy. In its search for a new philosophy or student ideology, a new definition of the student is offered. Because students share certain common experiences it is possible to describe the student world as an original and autonomous grouping defined by function, that is, intellectual labour.

Thus, the student himself is a young intellectual worker, placed as a worker, in the main-stream of the community. He is an active and responsible citizen with a definite social role.

syndicalism gives student new status

According to the University of Montreal's Serge Joyal, in a paper he presented to the founding conference of the Union Générale des Etudiants du Québec (UGEQ), "student syndicalism defends the economic and social interests of the students; it helps him to understand the solidarity of all segments of society, be they intellectual workers or manual workers; it is the directing force towards the socialization of the student; it integrates him within the nation by giving him the status of a young intellectual worker, and thus of a fully participating, active, responsible citizen; it transforms the intellectual conditions of the students' task so that the school is no longer on the margin of society."

But, it is necessary to look at the actual program of the student syndicalists in order to fully appreciate the impact that the movement may have in Canada.

The students' council in the traditional university is analogous to the guild. It has no view on education, no long range philosophy; it initiates no reforms binding on succeeding councils and hence is unable to initiate many of the reforms that are most urgently needed. It does not insist on analyzing the underlying causes of social problems or students' problems; it seeks only short term solutions. There is no general scheme of student activity, dynamism or direction.

This minoritarian group is considered by student syndicalists to

be utterly introverted and alienated from evolution in teaching or changes in society.

The program of student syndicalism is aimed directly at this sterility of conventional student government. Syndicalists claim the first goal of the students' council is to serve students. The service must be based on the needs of the student as a young intellectual worker and as a citizen of the nation. Thus, the service must be primarily concerned with working and living conditions, and with the integration of the student into the community.

The services are usually grouped under three headings:

- Financial Services: scholarship discounts, cafeterias, vending machines, fee reductions, etc.
- Educational Services: debates, conferences, lectures, publications, newspapers, clubs, etc.
- Cultural Services: art center, theatre, etc.

Unlike the guild concept of student government, the student syndicate, or union, adds a new dimension to service. The trigger for launching student syndicalism at the University of Montreal was a student strike, not for better food in residence, or for cheaper text-books, but on behalf of workmen at the university who were attempting to form a union, presumably to gain better working conditions.

aim to remove all university fees

Quite naturally, student syndicalists make certain demands of the educational system. The primary aim of the movement is to remove all university fees and enable all students to enjoy a decent standard of living without reference to their socio-economic background.

Those active in the movement feel also that students should have a greater voice in university policy and to this end they propose that both faculty and students be represented on boards of governors. There have also been proposals that students and junior faculty members be seated in the senates and on senate committees.

Another touchstone for student syndicalism is internationalism. Since peace is an essential condition for intellectual work the leaders of UGEQ feel that it is necessary to unite internationally to foster peace. Something of this attitude seems to play a part in the present Canadian Union of Students (CUS) campaign against South Africa; the CUS leaders believe that racism can lead only to war.

Student syndicalists believe that students are citizens by virtue of their role as learners, and like any other citizens they exercise their rights in the nation by virtue of their community participation. For this reason, student syndicalists feel it is necessary to work for the removal of social problems not directly related to education. For example, a university student body might decide to conduct a "war on poverty" in its area, both through practical programs and the exercise of pressure on the government.

Under responsible leadership, student syndicalism could mean a better way of life for Canadian students; or it could mean unmitigated disaster.

