

By Peter Boothroyd

We should stay in WUSC

It's sad to see The University of Alberta student body become more and more isolated from the rest of Canadian students. We pulled out of the Canadian Union of Students (CUS) in 1966, and apparently student council may decide we should pull out of the World University Services in Canada.

In both cases the issue has been whether the organization has any right to take political stands. It seems the U of A student body is one of the last in Canada to recognize that a person, or an organization, cannot avoid taking political stands of one kind or another. CUS and WUSC always have been political organizations, but until recently they have been mostly concerned with issues immediately obvious as being important to students.

But while other students seem to be coming aware that what is happening in, say Vietnam, is less obviously, but just as importantly, related to students as, say freedom of speech at Acadia U., The University of Alberta student body still tries to make a very naive distinction between those political events which affect students and those which are beyond students' concerns.

Let's take as an example last year's march on the provincial legislature to protest the raise in tuition fees. The suggestion by some that a sign be carried saying "tax oil, not students" was vetoed by the student leadership, presumably for the same reasons that they were, and are, opposed to resolutions and action about Vietnam.

It is politically unwise . . .

To them, saying "tax oil, not students" is taking political sides and unfair to the students who believe in oil companies. To me, not saying where the money is to come from to replace the extra \$100 per year students are paying, is irresponsible.

Would we be happy if the government found the million dollars by raising the sales tax which directly discriminates against the poor? Would we be happy if the government took the million dollars from an already skimpy hospital budget?

Undoubtedly there are some students who really don't care where the money comes from, who don't care who gets hurt for our benefit.

There's no point in preaching against that kind of selfishness. But surely one is not really being "fair", as the students' union thinks, by appeasing such people.

Now the analysis is not quite finished. For by the same token that it is short-sighted to think of the university apart from Canadian society, it is politically unwise to think of Canada apart from her place in the world. The oil companies in Alberta, like practically all other primary industries in Canada, are owned by a very few American cartels. To increase their taxes would require affirming the intention we were no longer going to allow American corporations to regard Canada's resources as their private reserve. To cut our defence budget would mean that no longer were we going to keep up useless

expenditures just so the United States would not have to worry about us getting any crazy ideas in our head about working for a peaceful world rather than being another prop in the Cold War.

Since the United States sees, probably correctly, that her economic well-being, (or at least well-being for some), depends on her military forces and economic control of most of the non-communist world, it is unlikely that she will graciously allow us to decide our own taxes on a highly strategic reserve such as oil or to freely determine our own foreign policy. (She has not, for instance, allowed Vietnam this freedom.)

If Canada is to extricate herself from the tentacles of American imperialism in order to determine her own economic priorities and distributions of wealth—e.g. replacing the defence budget with an education budget and replacing the Oilmen's Club with university education available to all—we have to work for such a change. When CUS denounces American imperialism it is not simply making romantic or silly gestures. It is recognizing, on the basis of some hard thought, that it is pointless to talk about holding the line on tuition fees without coming to terms with the political realities which force the fees up.

It is when a student body tries to stop fee-hikes while being "fair" by refusing to take political stands that we have an instance of romantic and irresponsible activism.

A ladies club which does nice things

Pulling out of CUS, WUSC or any other body which works to trace students' problems to their root causes, is sad not only because we are withdrawing our support from a movement aiming to achieve an equitable and worthy education system in, (if we may borrow a phrase,) a just society, but also because we are insulating ourselves from even thinking about the problems we, and our fellow students around the world, face. It is sad because we dropped out of CUS just when it started becoming seriously concerned about students and society.

It is sad because just when WUSC has started undertaking some honest thinking about the real problems poor countries face, we decide that WUSC may be too radical for us.

Perhaps one may be excused if he sees the students' union as a

rich ladies' club which likes to do nice things so long as it isn't controversial and so long as its members can advance their own social prestige.

When we try to stay politically uninvolved, we are in fact saying that there is nothing in Canada or in the world worth our opposition. We are stating very clearly to outsiders, that basically we're conservative, for we are stating that we will not try to change the status quo. Miss Pilkington is justifiably piqued at instances of boorish behaviour at the CUS Congress, and it is fair enough that she state her objections to covering the picture of the Queen with that of Ho Chi Minh.

I hope, however, that our elected representatives are not making political judgements on the basis of items they consider personally distasteful. We can't afford to allow them that kind of luxury.

It appears nobody appreciated the editorial on the trimester system. Last issue, we had a lengthy discourse from an grad student in English who objected to the article. Today, we have a few more. One thinks it is satire and the other laughed until they reconsidered the source.

There is a criticism of the course guide and another person who writes sarcastic letters and then leaves a clueless name.

Peter Boothroyd writes again—this time

about WUSC and CUS. He has a great deal to say about the whole money situation.

Reminder to send letters to The Editor, The Gateway and bring them to 282 SUB. We have a few letters that look more like term papers. We will not print them. Two typewritten pages (50 lines) is plenty.

Some cartoons are coming in. The person who sketched the cartoon on page four should at least tell us his name. We welcome all cartoons.

—The Editor

No laughing matter

The Editor,

We first met with mild laughter your article, The Trimester System the Sooner the Better, and then after consideration of its source, a university newspaper, our mirth turned to consternation.

Demonstrating the insight of a 12-year-old, you expounded the incredible idea that there is some inherent negative correlation between activity and activism. No schedule is rigorous enough to stifle the thinking mind.

Further, your sweeping condemnation of demonstrations is generally most unjust and unenlightened. In order to protest any institution, law, dictum, the minimum requirement is to know that this institution, etc., exists. Possibly your own naivete and lack of awareness founds your lack of comprehension of the continual need for the change and improvement promulgated by these movements.

Then you continue, "After they have been educated they would be better qualified to take sides in mature thinking . . ." but education is an extension of life processes, not an isolated experience apart from life. Students who demand a voice in their government merely reflect this sophisticated level of awareness.

And then finally, to propose that money is the motive, master and mouthpiece of education illustrates your ultimate lack of understanding of the university experience. Views such as these exemplify the very lack of tolerance and rampant hypocrisy that enlightened students are rising up against.

Sincerely,
John and Tina Bell
Grad Studies
Chemistry

Ed Note: The letter was concluded with "sincerely". We hope they are.

Someone sees the light

The Editor,

I was recently pleasantly surprised to find one of my fellow student has been maintaining the exceptionally high standards expected of all those attending this hallowed institution.

It is exciting to know my fees and the fees of ten other students will more than be able to support this colleague in keeping the administration on their toes.

I am sure no one could dispute the fact that \$6,090 is not too high a price to pay for the replacement of the rug in the Graduate Student Lounge in the Tory Building. Cutting a gaping hole out of the original one is definitely one of the more constructive acts that could be fabricated to let the university hierarchy know the student body at large is ready to take a mature voice in the governing of our trouble-ridden educational system.

Lets keep up the support.

A. Narchist



EVERYBODY WRITES . . . on page FIVE

The course guide

The Editor,

Friday, Sept. 13's Gateway had several interesting comments on the impersonal knowledge factory aspect of universities. On page four you ran an editorial entitled The Trimester System the Sooner the Better, which struck me as probably satire.

I therefore consider that I agree with you in opposing the de-personalized instant processing purportedly advocated by the editorial.

One possible advantage to the semester system is that organization of study time would be much simpler with few courses to work on at one season. However, if a person learns to organize a number of activities at once, he is better equipped for business than if he falls to pieces with the variety. Summer jobs can help the student in several ways; by widening his experience, by showing him possibilities for his future, and by giving him a refreshing change of environment. Much education would be missed by continuous courses all year.

Contrary to your editorial, I believe ignorant protest would increase with complete sealing off of the students. The present system with its seasonal variation allows us to learn a little before we leap to protest.

The story of Ken Stone, of Toronto, ripping his diploma, shows an example of displacement behaviour. Ken apparently directed his energy to preparation for life by getting a degree, and missed much education. It sounds as though he missed life by preparing for it, so that his degree disgusted him. He could not relive those years, so he took it out on his diploma. Interpersonal relationships are learned by living rather than by reading. In preparation for further life we do well to remember we are living.

Association with other people is part of life, and also a good part of education; but it cannot be taught in courses: it is the personal responsibility of the student.

Peter Boothroyd's criticism of the impersonal system of education which we work and fool under, and the lack of contact between faculty and students, makes some very good points, but I have found exceptions.

Most of my professors were and are interested in the individuals of the classes. I have noticed this even in large classes. The geology department is especially good, from my experience, with most of its professors willing to be very human.

Without such human professors, so interested in their students, a lot of students would have lost job opportunities, or completely muffed registration and courses.

I am very thankful to my professors and for the freedom given within this system, even though this may all be an exceptional case.

John Armstrong
Science 33/4

An anarchist?

The Editor,

I am writing about the new student course guide. Although good in many ways, it has one serious fault. Its selective nature is not made clear. Many courses have been excluded from it. Since the honour roll is based only on the courses mentioned, some of the best teachers in the university have been left out.

This is certainly an injustice to the teachers involved. But it is a greater injustice to those students who, by taking the "course guide" too literally, may miss out on some excellent tuition.

It is unfortunate that all undergraduate courses cannot be included in this excellent guide. But if they cannot, I would hope that its limits could be made very clear in the next issue.

(Miss) E. W. Hatchard
Graduate Student
Department of
Philosophy