

editorial

The great building policy debate

I've heard comments ever since the Great Building Policy Controversy began that *Gateway*, as a political organ, has a responsibility to its readers to take a stand on this "vital issue."

Please note that I do not claim to speak for every *Gateway* staff member, but felt that perhaps it was about time I threw in my own two cents' worth.

Early in July, Henry Malta, organizer for the U of A Young Socialists, told me that his organization had been warned by Randy McDonald, Students' Union vp services, that they would have to remove their literature table from SUB.

Reasons offered were that the table constituted a fire hazard and created congestion in the mall. Taking into consideration the time of year, with the greatly decreased student population, and the fact that the YS table was the only one set up at the time, the reasons were ridiculous.

However, on July 5, Malta received a letter from Gary Croxton, executive vp, telling the YS to "cease and desist the sale and distribution of literature..." The letter continued that if the notice was not complied with, campus police would be requested to remove the YS from SUB. Attached was a copy of the document which defined use of the SUB mall. Document E709 states:

At the present time, a Flea Market occupies the SUB mall on Fridays. Students who participate are charged a fee of \$4.00/day and non-students are charged a fee of \$8.00/day.

Other groups not involved in the market and who are selling literature are not being charged. There seems to be some friction between the people participating in the market and those who are not.

It is recommended by the [Building Policy] Board that Friday be designated as Market Day in SUB. This shall be the only day that activities will occur on the Mall. All groups and/or individuals who are selling commodities will be charged for a space on the Mall. Those who are not selling anything will not be charged.

The implementation of Friday as Market Day would facilitate the operation of SUB by lowering operating costs, and create a more desirable atmosphere in SUB.

Well, hey, I got interested in just how this recommendation got passed; went through last year's bundle of Students' Council minutes and discovered some amazing things.

On November 6, 1972, Rob Spragins, executive vp, and Carl Kuhnke, science rep, moved that the recommendations in Document E709 be adopted by Council. Garry West, vp finance, moved to object to consideration. The motion failed 12/7.

West and Mark Priegart, arts rep, moved to table the motion. That also failed, 9/9. Spragins and Gerry Riskin, SU president, then moved "To amend Policy Board Recommendations such that no restrictions are added to those which exist at present with respect to days other than flea market days." That also failed 3/11/6.

Pat Delaney, vp academic, and West moved to question which was carried. The main motion was also passed with negative votes coming from Riskin, West, Priegart and Chris Bearchell, arts rep.

On November 27, 1972, twenty-three Council members discussed amendments to the previously adopted recommendations. Document E797 states:

Due to the inconvenience students have experienced with the Building Policy Board Recommendation concerning the Flea Market, the following is recommended:

- 1) *reind the existing recommendation;*
- 2) *there should be no charge for students using floor space; however, the charge for non-students will remain;*
- 3) *activities may occur throughout the week;*
- 4) *in order to maintain efficiency, groups shall book tables, chairs, etc., from Barb Paine, Scheduling Officer;*
- 5) *because of the many groups, clubs, etc., a group will be allowed to book a table for one week periods, with no limit on the number of weeks;*
- 6) *there will be a limit of one table to a group.*

The recommendation was defeated.

The reason I've gone through this tedious ancient history is that it was such a revelation to discover that it was our very own student representatives who put the recommendation through. That nasty sneaky Executive actually fought the motion.

Now, then, clubs and groups and Young Socialists, could this possibly tell you anything? Like maybe we the Students whose "rights" you are supposedly so stalwartly concerned with defending actually want restrictions placed on the use of the A SUB mall?

Could it possibly have occurred to you that we are damned sick and tired of tripping over dogs and barefoot children, tired of wending our way through tables of expensive pottery and shoddy jewelry, tired of having to constantly brush aside pamphlets and incense sticks being shoved at us? Surprise, we are.

But back to the YS. Mixed in with the verbiage about defending the students' "rights," is the recurring claim that George Mantor, current SU president, is waging a personal political war against them. Personally, I don't think George is that stupid. What cannot be denied is that the YS is waging their own personal war against the SU Executive.

One of their favourite arguments in support of abolishing restrictions on use of the SUB mall is that last year's Executive did not enforce the building policy with regards to campus clubs. True enough, but let me repeat that it was the Executive who fought the motion and then ignored their responsibility to the students they supposedly represented by ignoring the adopted by-law.

Malta sent his press releases to campuses across Canada. Student governments from these campuses supposedly responded with scathing put-downs of "Mantor's" policy.

Personally, I only saw four responses (and the YS has been very good at keeping us up-to-date on the Mantor character assassination), from the *Poundmaker*, the University of Toronto Students' Administrative Council, the University of British Columbia Alma Mater Society and from the Brandon University student newspaper (this letter is reprinted on page 5; since the YS neglected to make it public, we will).

UBC and U of T were "shocked" and "appalled" to learn of the restrictions we the students have placed upon ourselves and which Mantor chose to uphold. UBC and U of T have "a large area in which campus groups are free to display their materials, and communicate their views to students."

That's the crux of the matter, isn't it? We at U of A do not have a large area in which to distribute and display. In fact, we have a very small area. In all fairness to everyone, campus clubs and masses of faceless students alike, there have to be some restrictions placed on the use of the SUB mall.

We have all discovered that the Friday flea market did not work. It would be equally irresponsible to completely open the building to all comers.

Council should adopt a new policy allowing free use of the SUB mall five days a week for all campus clubs. But, for the good of all students who must pass through their building even once during each day, restrictions should be placed on the number and size of tables to be set up daily. Any group who is honestly concerned that students on this campus get their "rights," will not balk at a by-law that says that no one group should get more space or time than any other group.

This is the Students' Union Building, and we must maintain our rights to use of its facilities, but by "Students" we mean all students, not just those who have organized themselves into specific groups.

Allyn Cadogan

Young Socialists

The Young Socialist statement released on October 3rd, 1973 is first and foremost a clear unprovoked attack on the competence of individuals serving on the Building Policy Review Committee. In demanding the reservations of ourselves from the committee, the Young Socialists note the character of the committee is one that would prevent a truly democratic solution.

I can not see how the Young Socialist can make such a charge, when they have not been present during the deliberations of the committee, and even before the committee has gotten into the majority of the work before us.

I suggest it is not incompetent for us to carry on our work-but damned irresponsible for us to stop our work. The charge that we are unduly biased as to prevent a democratic decision is sheer nonsense and has not been backed up to any extent with any proof whatever.

I further dislike remarks made by Mr. Malta at the meeting of September 24th, 1973 suggesting a bias on my part to the favor of the executive and the ban. This was quite interesting as well as unfair in view of the fact that I seconded the motion that led to the lifting of the restrictions.

The young Socialist accuse the council of excluding the Young Socialists from the committee. This is not true. Two Young Socialists - Wendy Merkeley and Charlotte McDonald were appointed to the committee. At the first meeting of the committee, both resigned because Mr. Henry Malta had not been appointed. Before any discussion could take place on the matter both left the room. THERE IS NO YOUNG SOCIALIST ON THE COMMITTEE BECAUSE THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS RESIGNED FROM THE COMMITTEE'

The Young Socialists further charge that "that executive and some members of the committee

have already attempted to introduce extraneous issues, like the flea market, and muddy over the real question of political rights."

The charge is interesting in view of two facts:

- That the Young Socialists were not at the committee meeting and therefore they could not know what was or was not decided at that meeting; and

- That the question of literature tables and political information tables is a part of present Building Policy Regulations on the flea market.

The allegation that Gary Croxton is a member of the committee is only a half truth. Gary serves on the committee only in the capacity of non-voting chairman without power of debate, and he holds this position by virtue of his chairmanship of Building Policy Board.

The Young Socialists maintain that restriction on literature tables was an attack only on the Young Socialists. The allegation is further unsubstantiated.

The restrictions existed before the July 5th action on all groups by virtue of the Building Policy regulations. The action of July 5th was by virtue of the Young Socialist having set up their table on that date. There was no extension after that date to other groups - they were already included.

I do not defend these regulations. I oppose them, but it is a matter of fairness that the restrictions were never intended as an attack only on the Young Socialists.

Finally the Young Socialists charge harassment but fail to specifically say when and by whom. I would think it also interesting that the Young Socialists, when requesting money from the Students' Union have often received it. Is this harassment? I seriously doubt that the P.C.Y.F. would receive funds like the Young Socialists have in the past.

The Young Socialists charge of "red-baiting" is false. At no time did anybody accuse the Committee to defend Student Rights of the Abortion Repeal Coalition of being connected with the Young Socialists. By the words "red-baiting", the Young Socialists must really be ashamed of being Socialists.

The Young Socialists are at this time presenting motions to Students' Council which would lead to the desolution of the committee and the adoption of a non-solution which will not solve the problem put forth.

A complete review of building policy in this area is necessary if a true solution is to be found and maintained.

With or without Young Socialists on the Committee, it is a democratically constituted body and is so by a motion of Students' Council. Meetings of the committee are open, and submissions will be received soon on this important issue.

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Try these, too:

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