

NUS pushes for more student involvement

by Matt Adamson of Canadian University Press

Greater student involvement in the issues and more effort by student councils to present them are the goals of the new National Union of Students (NUS) fieldworker for the Atlantic region, Don Perry.

NUS is a country-wide organization of student unions and associations. By local referendum students vote to accept a \$1 per capita membership fee and mandate their institution to become an active participant in setting and implementing the organization's policy.

Based in Ottawa it researches the socio-economic situation as it concerns students, acts as a resource centre for its member institutions and other student groups, and lobbies the federal government.

There has not been a lot of political activity on Atlantic campuses since last spring and NUS has maintained a low profile here since Perry's predecessor quit in mid-October. Only two of the four Atlantic provinces, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, have provincial student organizations.

But Perry feels the recent announcement of next year's funding levels by the Maritime premiers and the virtual assurance of a working tuition increase, coupled with a full time person in the area will turn things around.

Since he was appointed in January Perry has visited several campuses in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

"So far, most of my time has been spent trying to get students and student councils involved in the federal election campaign," he said. "The Canada Student Loan Plan, summer job creation, the government funding arrangements are all issues with a national focus. Not since 1972 have students been able to vote while attending classes. It's quite an opportunity to get student concerns out into the debate."

A former student council president at Sir Wilfred College in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, Perry says he became inspired to work with NUS while attending the organization's national conference during the spring of 1978 in St. John's.

"I was amazed at the number of dedicated people

there were in the organization. I was also shocked to realize there were so many issues facing students and how the government was avoiding taking responsibility for post-secondary education."

The biggest problem in higher education, says Perry, is it is becoming less accessible to the average Canadian family.

"If you take government funding and tuition increases it means students have to go out and get a greater income to attend university. Unemployment rates among people 18-25 are the highest in Canada." He disagrees that today's campus population cares more about getting a good job when they graduate than the spiraling trend in education costs.

"It's pretty hard not to care. With the indexing of tuition fees to the cost of living as recommended by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) it could be \$75 more next year, \$75 the following year, and \$75 the year after that. Students will be paying \$225 more for the same services in three years time." The MPHEC dealt a lot with government restraint in their report. Restraint from what the government says has to be

the order of the day. I fail to see why students have to be singled out to suffer because of government restraint.

"If a person wants to better his or herself through education they should have every right to do so," says Perry, "but the debt sacrifice is intimidating."

"A student paying about \$900 in tuition costs and borrowing \$1800 in student loans will finish a four year program facing a \$7200 debt. They are expected to start repaying this six months after graduation, whether they have a job or not."

"Faced with borrowing about \$2000 a year not too many young people are going to participate in post-secondary education."

Perry sees the role of a fieldworker as a resource person working right on campus.

"If councils have any problems I'm there to help. With NUS or any other organizations."

"Mostly, it's working on the issues. I tell them what other people in the country are doing on a particular aspect of concern to students. I tell them what NUS is doing, and how other provincial governments are reacting."

If they want to I'll help them become involved, by getting

resource materials or helping them work on a brief."

Besides student councils NUS also has close contacts with provincial and regional organizations such as the British Columbia Federation of Students (BCFS) or the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). All the provinces except Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland have student organizations of some type or another. Some have a broad based funding structure with money being levied on a per capita basis used to fund a central office and full time staff. Others, like the Student's Union of Nova Scotia or the New Brunswick Coalition of Students, do not have direct funding and are more loosely knit.

Besides being a resource person Perry will also be doing a lot of leg work when working with the provincial organizations—encouraging communication among the various institutions, compiling information, and setting up meetings. Being from Newfoundland Perry is "at home in an area I'm familiar with."

"I feel there's a lot of opportunity in the Atlantic Provinces in terms of students being organized. Restraint affects students in the Atlantic with a lot more severity than the other regions of Canada."



TEQUILA SAUZA!



NUMERO UNO IN MEXICO AND IN CANADA

Boycott Olympics—Hardial Bains

Hardial Bains, president of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada, said at a news conference last Friday that the main issue facing Canadians is who should pay for the crisis, the rich or the people. He explained that the programmes of the previous Liberal government were designed to make the people pay, and that Crosby's budget was more of the same.

He said, "We are calling on the people to make the rich pay. This does not mean that we are calling on people to make rich individuals pay," but rather, "we are calling for the expropriation of the finance capitalists." The problems facing the country are

due to finance capitalists who are not interested in developing the economy or providing services in the interests of the people.

To further explain, he pointed out that capitalist economy has a boom-bust cycle in which there are periods of crisis featuring the destruction of productive forces, and periods of recovery. In both cases the motive is maximum profits for the finance capitalists, and this trend is leading to longer crisis periods and shorter periods of recovery.

On the question of energy, Mr. Bains pointed out that there is no real energy crisis but rather the problem is who controls energy. He explained that the abundant sources of energy in Canada are controlled by a handful of monopolies which create artificial shortages and price increases. The solution is to make them pay through expropriation without compensation. However, nuclear power development would be stopped until a method can be found for the safe disposal of the waste products.

"During the election campaign we have made some positive advances," Mr. Bains said, "in that before people were just reacting to the slogan 'Make the Rich Pay!' approvingly, while now they are asking more serious questions about how to make the rich pay." He said that during this and previous elections the party's aim was to develop definite pockets of influence upon which to base support,

while in the next election the party will be ready for a serious contest. He pointed out that in some ridings in Quebec polls indicate over 15% in favour of the Marxist-Leninists.

The second issue stressed by Mr. Bains was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He pointed out that the two main superpowers are the source of a possible third world war, because of their contention with each other for world domination. Mr. Bains condemned the Canadian government for lining up with the U.S. imperialists, and said that Canada should pull out of NATO and NORAD.

On the question of boycotting the Olympics, Mr. Bains recommended that the sportsmen and sportswomen of the world should not participate in sports contests under the aegis of either imperialist superpower.

Then Mr. Bains condemned the illegal activity of the Canadian government in Iran forging documents which helped six American espionage agents to escape. He said that because of these illegal acts the Canadian government has no moral or legal right to call upon others to support it internationally. It is questionable what other activities the Canadian embassy was engaged in on behalf of the government and the U.S. imperialists.

Further on the question of the economy, Mr. Bains made clear his party's plans to develop a self-reliant economy that is free from all forms of

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