

CFS protests federal social security cuts

by Christine Vila

OTTAWA (CUP) — Anyone who still wonders about the passion and intensity of the student movement obviously did not attend the Canadian Federation of Students' annual general meeting Nov. 7-14 in Hull.

Among other things, the CFS voted to stage a one-day nationwide strike in protest against the Liberal government's social security reform proposals on Jan. 25, 1994.

The CFS is a national lobbying organization that represents more than 50 campuses across the country. It is designed to give students a powerful voice in both tiers of government.

It typically deals with student concerns such as tuition fees and social justice issues.

Many delegates agreed that action against the social security reform proposals was the single most important element of the general meeting this year.

"This year, students from across the country have joined together and agreed that one of the most critical things facing students is the social program review," said Chloé Burgess of Malaspina Students' Union. "We are going to strike."

She stressed the importance of the CFS's voice. "According to Maclean's magazine two years ago, we're one of the top 10 most powerful lobbying organizations in the country."

The motion to support a nationwide strike resolved that a national strike and action be organized on Jan. 25, 1995 as a result of the federal government's move toward privatization of students loans and the funding of education.

Andrea Harrington, chair of the Trent University Student Union, expressed her support for the strike.

"I think that our coalition part-

ners are really counting on students who can get large numbers of people out, who can do effective media action to speak not just for our concerns, which is education — but for theirs as well."

She stressed, "We're looking at a complete change in Canada's way of life, and if we just limit ourselves to lobbying . . . then I think we're letting a lot of people down. We really

need to support this."

Others such as Kelly Lamrock, president of the University of New Brunswick Student Alliance, were not sure that threats were the best way to broker an agreement between the CFS and the federal government.

"I feel like I'm being asked to vote for the Charlottetown accord all over again. There seems to be a lot of,

'You have to vote yes,' and the feeling that if we don't, the sky is going to fall. That's not the way to sell this."

Objections to the strike were soundly defeated in a vote of 36-10, with seven abstentions.

The University of Ottawa's initiative to protest on Parliament Hill on Nov. 16 was widely supported by CFS members.

DSU gives SUNS the boot

by Lisa Lachance

"It was probably not the best worded recommendation," said Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) Vice President Executive Tiffany Jay regarding the DSU Officers decision to ask SUNS to leave the Dal Student Union Building. This is in light of recent meetings of students, DSU staff and Council in order to develop a cohesive plan for the building.

Some students and society representatives seeking answers to their questions gathered in the Green Room on Monday, November 14 to voice concerns and get answers. This Open Forum on SUB Planning was organized by Vice President Executive Tiffany Jay who said that it was "the start of several meetings that we will have in regards for ideas for our building."

Some of the issues raised by the four people in attendance included

the accessibility of several areas of the SUB. These included the Enquiry Desk — the counter is too high — and the cafeteria. The cafeteria's upper level is currently only accessible for students with disabilities by way of a plywood ramp.

One student, Nora Bednarski, outlined other concerns for the group, including the point that in renovations to the SUB "accessibility was not a choice or even a priority but part of the Building Code regulations." She also emphasized that "it's important that students with disabilities be a major part of these discussions."

A representative of the Dalhousie Women's Centre voiced concern over the commercialization of the SUB lobby. This was echoed by Wayne Groszko of the N.S. Public Interest Research Group who commented that some of their groups who could not get table space in the

SUB. This included the Homeless Action Research Team who is collecting toys and food for the poor in Halifax. They were not able to gain space for the upcoming weeks. He also made the point that often "students groups don't know months in advance what their activities are" unlike vendors.

Room 314 was also discussed. This currently serves as space for the Arts Society, the Science Society and BGLAD (Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Association of Dalhousie). Former Arts Society treasurer Beth Owen stated that it is not "effective shared space," and needed renovations, like permanent walls.

Overall, it was a valuable opportunity for students to talk about their use and experience in the SUB.

At the November 20 meeting of The DSU Council, Tiffany Jay made a SUB Ops Committee presentation. She outlined some more ex-

tensive ideas the Committee has after conversations with the University Architect and Bill Lord, the Director of Physical Plant and Planning. These included the moving of society space in 314 to rooms on the Second Floor currently occupied by Campus Activities and SUB Reservations. It would include the extension of existing walls and the creation of direct hallway access for four separate. Another major proposal was to completely restructure the Lobby area.

DSU Council has been expecting a SUB plan from the SUB Ops committee for some time now. In fact, the Committee did not meet a Council directive from the meeting of October 16 to produce a report for the November 6 meeting.

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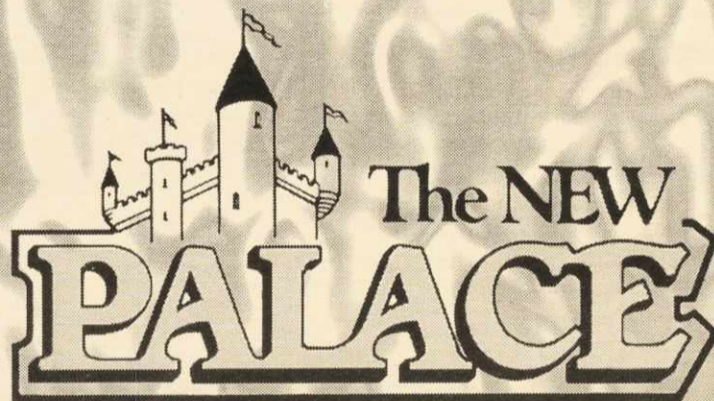
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