The union from . . .

By MARILYN PILKINGTON

In recent weeks the Campus Involvement Association, fondly referred to as the CIA, has risen from the remains of the defunct Pro-CUS Committee to imply that the Students' Council is not doing its job, and that therefore they have no choice but to step in and offer an alternative to our student government.

This seems to me a very arrogant attitude and a rather misleading development if it is examined in the context of the facts of student government at The University of Alberta. Because all these facts have not been set before the students, I would like to outline just what the students' council and the students' union is doing and how the CIA is attempting, so far with little success, to undermine these programs in an attempt to discredit our student leaders.

I assert that the CIA is needlessly attempting to duplicate programs already offered by the students' union in order to imply that the students' council is doing nothing in these areas. This action is irresponsible, and though I commend the CIA for its interest and concern about students and the university community, I cannot agree with their proposed tactics.

Marilyn Pilkington, the new kind of student activist and nineteen-year-old first lady of the students' council takes off her gloves to thrash out at Casserole (students' council's worst friend) and to invite the CIA (old kind of student activist) to bring its "ideas" to council meetings rather than hoard them in "splendid isolation". Casserole invites you to read-along-with-Marilyn and see how things look through the Pilkington Glass.

I will be the first to admit there are many problems within student government. First there is a lack of continuity. With student officers changing every year, policies aren't always carried to completion. The short term of office means that by the time student leaders recognize the problems within the students' union system, their term is over and they have done little to reform the structure. It is difficult too when one works within a system to abstract oneself from that system. One becomes committed to the structure because it is his responsibility to administer it. It is especially difficult to lead a student organization, a corporation with considerable assets, when one also has responsibilities as a student which make considerable demands on his time.

the Pilkington view

These are some of the problems, seemingly unavoidable, which beset student governments. While I don't suggest that they absolve student leaders from all criticism, I think they should be considered before student leaders are condemned.

If the students in the CIA have constructive suggestions for the reform of the students' council, I would like to hear them. And if they are practical, meritous suggestions, let's incorporate or implement them. I have criticisms of the students' council too, and I have ideas for change. It would seem to me to be reasonable if we are all cognisant of problems, to sit down and examine them and work out alternatives.

But the CIA, which we know of only through The Gateway, which has never approached the council in any way, has never attempted to communicate or discuss with the council the problems which they would like to see examined, has offered no constructive criticisms. In fact they are attempting to ignore council, rather than trying to change it.

Rather than attempting to bring about changes in the structure and in the operation of the students' council to make it more effective in future years, they are in a very anarchistic way attempting through a "spontaneous" ad hoc group to form a "political relationship" with the rest of the students on the campus.

But if the students' council does not represent students, the CIA certainly cannot purport to do so. The November 25 editorial in the Gateway states "If our beloved students' union officials would bother to find out what students are really thinking, they would find that it is the union which is irrelevant—not the students who are apathetic."

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