

FAS in the Past Lane

by Richard Watts

Delegates voted unanimously to disband the Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) at a conference in Lethbridge last weekend.

The dissolution came as a result of referendums held by the undergrads of the University of Calgary and Lethbridge Community College where the students voted to end their membership in the Federation.

The remaining membership, consisting of the U of A, U of C Grad students, Grande Prairie Regional College, and Lethbridge Community College (whose Membership ends in August) all agreed that an organization which claimed to represent the students of Alberta but did not have every student's support could not hope to gain much credibility with the government.

As a result of this agreement all delegates supported a motion that gave the mandate to the executive committee of the Federation to work towards legally dissolving it by the end of this July.

Said President of the Federation Don Millar, "When an organization is being dissolved it's hard to be encouraged but I was

heartened to see the delegates recognizing that there is a need to work at a provincial level."

"Ironically the need to lobby the government on issues such as government cutbacks to education and student aid is now more pressing than ever," Millar continued.

One of the delegates from the U of A, VP Finance Roger Merkosky, agreed with Millar.

"We spent one whole day discussing issues, which was very important for people remaining in the Student Movement since these issues won't go away," said Merkosky.

Nevertheless Merkosky was heartened by the discussion that took place at the conference.

"Even though we agreed to dissolve the organization we did agree that there is a need for a united student voice within the province."

Another U of A delegate, next year's VP External Andrew Watts was also not completely disillusioned with the results of the conference:

"I learnt a lot about issues facing students and got some good advice on how to deal with those issues next year."

Said Millar of the positive aspects of the conference, "Yes, of course it can be said it was productive as FAS conferences always are."

The extensive files and resource material left behind from the activities of the Federation's former full-time researcher Janet Mahr will be placed at the disposal of the U of A's VP External with the understanding that the U of A SU communicate any material to other institutions should it be requested.

In addition to the legal and administrative details that will have to be worked out in the dissolution of FAS, the executive will also be pursuing legal action against the U of C Students' Union. After holding the referendum in which a decision to withdraw from FAS was handed down the U of C made it known that they are going to withhold their membership fees for 82/83.

The FAS by-laws state that membership fees are to be collected from individual students and any institution that withdraws is liable for the fees for that term since membership cannot be terminated before the following August.

Any money left over after the dissolution of the Federation will be placed in trust to be used to pay for communication between post-secondary educational institutions.



photo Ray Giguere

ROWRRRRRR-BRAP-BRAPPA-BRAPPA-BRAP goes the chain saw and this Forestry student is well on his way cutting through this forest log.

Constitutional abuse

TORONTO (CUP) — Canada's new constitution is "one step forward, two steps behind," according to Edward Greenspan, a well-known Toronto criminal lawyer.

Greenspan, although not a constitutional lawyer, was recently invited by the University of Toronto Law Society to speak on "The Canadian Charter of Rights: At Least the Words are Pretty."

He said section One of the charter, which guarantees rights and freedoms "subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed

by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free democratic society," permits abuse.

"Opportunistic judges" could use this clause to justify the suspension of personal rights or lax judges could use it to "opt out" making a ruling on the charter's applicability in a complex case.

He was also critical of Section 33, which allows federal and provincial governments to opt out of certain rights guarantees or override them altogether. Quebec has already done this with severe legislation removing bargaining rights of provincial employees.

Social Science?

by Wesley Oginski

First year Science student, David Koch, is trying to organize students to forge an Association for Science students.

"There's a need," says Koch, "for the science students to have one voice that will take complaints to Students' Union council, General Faculties Council and the faculty if necessary."

Koch is currently circulating a petition through the Science departments to determine whether some student support exists for such an organization.

Ellen Solomon, Secretary of the General Faculties Council (GFC), says the association must register through the Office of Student Affairs to be recognized by the University. If they do not, the student group will be ineligible to obtain a liquor licence for socials or obtain space for social functions.

She adds the GFC Code of Student Behavior lists the duties and obligations of student faculty organization. These include the responsibility to maintain discipline at its functions, register all guest speakers, and conduct elections for student GFC representatives.

The SU on the other hand only requires that the faculty recognize the group as the official student faculty organization. Then, according to SU Clubs Commissioner Sterling Sunley, they will automatically be registered with the Students' Union.

According to Sunley, an association representing Science students would only have to be acknowledged by the Faculty to be a legal organization.

"They (the student group) have to be recognized by the Faculty," he explains, then the

Students' Union will register them as the Faculty Association."

Associate Dean Dave Beatty says an Association of Science students would be supported by the Faculty of Science.

"We've encouraged the Science students to organize," he says.

Beatty continues by explaining that Science is composed of diverse disciplines, each with a heavy and difficult workload. Add that two-thirds of students are in the general program, most do not get involved with departmental organizations immediately. A faculty association would be made readily available when they first enter the Science program.

Don Williams, Finance Planning Officer for the Faculty of Science, concurs. "A large number of students are in the three-year general program. They have no organization in any form to represent them."

Since there is no overt cohesion of the general program students, both Beatty and Williams say it is difficult for these students to organize.

"Students have tried on various occasions (to organize a faculty association)," Beatty says, "and for some reasons haven't."

Koch chronicles the last two attempts made.

"In 1971, there was a Science Students' Society incorporated...it fizzled out," he explains. "In 1976, the University VP academic sent notes to all the Students' Union councillors in Science saying that they should set up a Science Students Association. But to the best of my knowledge it never went anywhere."

Koch hopes his attempt will meet with better success. If he captures the needed support, an Association for Science Students could be functioning in September.

Savvy strengthens Solidarity

by Gilbert Bouchard

Roman Laba, an American research student and Solidarity Activist, spoke last Friday in Tory Turtle on Poland's "state of war," and the future of Solidarity.

Laba, who lived in Poland from July 1980 until his expulsion in November 1982 because of his contacts with the outlawed Solidarity labour union, was sponsored by the East European Solidarity Committee to speak on campus. Currently working on a book, Laba studied the history of the Solidarity movement while in Poland with its own historians.

At ease with his material and relating well to the thirty people scattered about the lecture hall, Laba provided a brief historical overview of the Solidarity movement. He explained that "what happened, (the August 1980 uprising), was unexpected and had developed from the great strikes of 1970 and 1971, the bad economic situation, and Polish Dictator General Jaruzelski's oppressive regime. But the real cause of the Solidarity movement was the collective memory of the 1970 and 1971 strikes. Laba called the sixteen months between the 1980 uprising and the imposition of marshal law, "the heroic days."

Laba stressed Solidarity's maturity, its efforts to protest via peaceful means, massive protests, strikes, and massive refusals, in an effort to force Jaruzelski's regime to reach some form of compromise. Solidarity's leaders "refrained their followers from physical violence, symbolic protest versus concrete nightsticks, tanks and guns."

Laba attributes this maturity to the changing psychology of the Polish worker. No longer is the typical Polish worker an impoverished country bumpkin happy to make any wage simply to escape the grinding oppression of the Polish villages; "Polish workers want to win, have a sense of measure and are political realists not advocating radical leftist dreams. Workers are concerned with going too far."

The worker's political savvy molded Solidarity's efforts to achieve a realistic compromise during its 16 month coup. Solidarity simply wanted input into the nation management and economic destiny, "they did not demand alterations to the Warsaw pact," Laba said.

Solidarity's 16 months ended on December 13, 1981 with the imposition of marshal law. Laba demonstrated that the Polish Constitution has no provision for marshal law, only for preparation for war, hence Jaruzelski imposed a state of war. "The war of Jaruzelski against the Polish people."

Laba attested that during this state of war, over 10,000 people were arrested "with many more being detained for questioning." People were arrested according to lists made by the police, with union heads, strike leaders, and Solidarity supporters being arrested. In its efforts to crush the union, the military regime cut telephone communications with the outside world, and restricted travel within Poland, setting a pall of "tremendous terror, with people frightened to answer their doors," over the nation.

Historically, Laba felt that the Allies gave Eastern Europe to the Soviets after the war and refused to lift a finger to aid the suicidal/heroic Solidarity move-

ment. The West watched as trade unions were "suspended" during the early days of the state of war.

Ironically the Solidarity movement benefitted from the suspension, with a "new flurry of activity." Newspapers, journals, and radio broadcasts spread the voice of Solidarity and sired a new surge of symbolic protest. Hastily inspired news letters were printed in kitchens with tinfoil, machine grease and wringer washers.

The Solidarity movement, weakened before the state of war, was strengthened by the imposition of marshal law. "Support for the union increased during the state of war with over 94 per cent of the country's workers demanding the reactivation of Solidarity."

But after the November 1982 abolishment of all trade unions, Solidarity does not know where to go. Laba concluded that "Solidarity is now soul-searching, debating what it should do now. What we have is a political stalemate, a young population with no hopes, a nation cast in the sewers."

Because they wanted bread and freedom and a better Poland...

