

Quebec students may strike for reforms

Montreal (CUP) - Quebec faces a general student strike if the Parti Quebecois government does not respond to student concerns.

The strike plan is a last ditch effort for Quebec's largest student association, which so far has nothing to show for its intense protest and lobby campaign to cancel proposals for sweeping reforms to the college system.

The Association Nationale des Etudiants du Quebec has staged one-day rotating strikes for a month and gathered 50,000

signatures on a petition, but so far the Quebec government has not responded. ANEQ's demands include abolition of sweeping college reforms and a new law that strictly regulates student associations. They also want higher welfare payments for youth, and better student aid.

But not all 21 campuses in ANEQ are happy with the decision to go for a general strike.

At the Feb. 25-26 ANEQ conference, the strike was supported by a slim majority. Plans for

a strategy including information sessions with students and further attempts to speak with government officials were all but ignored.

Two members of the ANEQ central council, Peter Wheeland and Diane Messier, resigned after the vote to strike, partially to protest the lack of ANEQ strategy.

Alternatives to the general strike included demonstrations, research and information blitzes. ANEQ now plans to use money originally slated for research to

cover any legal costs after the general strike.

A member of the Concordia Student Association, Benevise Morin, called this budget change "pure shit."

"We took a very strong stand against the strike," says Morin. "We feel a strike is political suicide because the local associations are not ready for it."

The other anglophone member of ANEQ, the McGill Student Society, has been unhappy with ANEQ strategy all year. The McGill society has refused to pay its \$20,000 membership fee, although Wheeland hoped the Society would agree to cover the costs of ANEQ research into education issues.

Despite a referendum last year where McGill students voted to join ANEQ, the student society is now asking students to join the Regroupement des Associations Etudiants Universitaires.

Patrick Gagnon, Student Society external affairs vice presi-

dent, says that the RAFU achieves more by lobbying education department officials than any of ANEQ's strikes.

ANEQ members, on the other hand, says RAEU has the government's ear only because it supports the Parti Quebecois.

RAEU did the rough draft of Law 32 regulating student associations. Since its inception in May 1983, several university and college administrations have used the law to harass their student associations.

With money allotted for research going to strike support, ANEQ has handed the McGill Students Society the ammunition it needs to encourage McGill students to vote for RAEU membership.

RAEU executives will be glad of that. In the past two years, RAEU membership has dropped to four student associations, three of these located on the Universite de Montreal campuses.

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Women as priests heresy

Toronto (CUP) - More than 50 men and women demonstrated outside the Toronto headquarters of the Catholic Church recently to protest a pastoral letter by Emmett Cardinal Carter which equates the ordination of women as priests with heresy.

During the hour-long protest demonstrators made speeches, sang hymns and lit candles. One protestor carried a sign which read: "Pastoral Letter: Return to Sender."

In his letter Carter said that to teach the ordination of women "is to teach heresy."

"The issue is sharply drawn, and leaves no middle ground," Carter wrote.

Protestor Laurie Bell said the demonstration like this would seem like irreverence to some people, but that so many women did come shows were appealing to a greater reverence," Bell said.

She said the protestors formed an "ad hoc network" of women

and men who either study or are involved in Catholic education. The group included teachers, students from the Toronto School of Theology and the University of Toronto's St. Michael's College, high school students and ministers from other religious denominations.

"We only had two days to organize, and we expected only 10 or 12 women to show up. I'm really happy with the numbers," Bell said.

Sister Dianne Bridges, a chaplain at U of T's St. Michael's College, said the protest was an "appropriate response" to Carter's letter. "I think it (the letter) represents a theological system, not the only theological system, so it's not dogma. It's not an infallible document," Bridges said.

The Feb. 3 demonstration was the first protest in the history of the chancery office, said one participant.

Disarmament hearing

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Joe Clark strongly agreed, saying that the challenge was to mobilize public opinion on both sides (East and West) to common goals.

Dr. Bob Crawford of the University Nuclear Disarmament Organization emphasized that by testing missiles in Canada, we are "implying approval" of the arms race.

Crawford insisted that disarmament is more of a political issue than a scientific one.

The politicians are "holding the ball" Crawford said.

Clark responded by informing the members of the University Disarmament Organization that he was not there to receive "political advice."

The hearings were held throughout the day and were constantly interrupted by people wandering in and out.

The crowd averaged about 50 - including a sizable media contingent.

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