



SUPA Joins

Battle For New Social Order

(Editor's Note: The following is a background paper on the Student Union for Peace Action, which was presented to the 29th annual Canadian Union of Students held earlier this month in Lennoxville, Que.)

The Student Union for Peace Action was formed in December, 1964, at a meeting of 150 students in Regina, Sask., which was called by the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CUCND). During that meeting the CUCND was disbanded and SUPA formed.

The CUCND was created in 1959, and for five years supported a policy of world disarmament and Canadian non-alignment in the Cold War. The CUCND was primarily a political pressure group which carried out an extensive program of public education.

By the end of 1963 it had become evident that more than a pressure group was needed to change world conditions; the Canadian government had acquired nuclear weapons and many CUCND members began to realize that war and peace were issues which required more than top-level government action. The Regina conference a year later molded these ideas into a new organization.

During the week-long conference a statement of purpose was drawn up which contained six essential points:

- to bring about real peace, fundamental social changes would have to be brought about
- opposition to the nation-state system within which wars took place
- Canadian non-alignment in the East-West Cold War struggle
- non-violence as a *modus operandi* for SUPA activities
- acceptance of the principle of student unionism which recognizes students as a force for social change.
- a peaceful world would be one of social and political justice and freedom, free from violence and one in which there was no exploitation of man by man.

One of the most important products of these principles was the SUPA program of summer community projects, which were the first attempts to alleviate the fundamental social conflicts—poverty, discrimination against minorities and alienation—which lead to war. This summer the seven projects involved 80 students on a full-time basis.

During the summer of 1964, seven CUCND members conducted a summer project at North Bay, Ont., to examine the nature of that community's dependence on nearby military bases and to begin drawing up a conversion plan which could be used in the event of disarmament. That project has since been taken up by an inter-municipal committee and is being financed by government and foundation sources.

This summer there were SUPA projects with Doukhobors in the Kootenay, slum dwellers in Kingston, another project at La Macaza on

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The Gateway welcomes letters on topics of student interest. Correspondents are asked to be brief, otherwise their letter will be subject to abridgement. And correspondents, in replying to one another, should keep to the issues under discussion and abstain from personal attacks. All letters to the editor must bear the name of the writer. No pseudonyms will be published.

Exceptional circumstances apart, no letter should be more than about 300 words in length. Short letters are more likely to be published promptly—and to be read.

"disarmament, development and decolonization," an organizing project with Toronto social workers, the beginning of university reform projects, a school for social theory to study the broader issues of social change, and, in co-operation with other student organizations, the Student Neestow Partnership project with Saskatchewan Indians and Metis.

All these projects are based on principles of community organizing. The role of a community organizer is to help people—slum dwellers, Indians, professionals, students—come together to discuss their problems and find their own solutions. The community organizer does not find or impose solutions on communities; he serves as a catalyst to help bring unorganized people together.

Therefore, the work of the summer project members has been to a large extent determined by the members of the community in which they are working.

Most of the projects are continuing at a reduced scale throughout the winter and will be enlarged again next summer. It is probable that several other projects involving greater numbers of students will begin next summer. Each project is responsible for its own financing, which was conducted through public appeals, donations from churches and labor unions and, in some cases, large donations by students' councils.

At the Regina conference there was a marked tendency among many delegates toward a de-centralized SUPA structure. The structure which emerged at Regina was one of a national council, five regions and campus branches. A national office was located in Toronto. This was a large step away from the highly-centralized structure of the CUCND. Since December, a number of factors, principally the projects, have increased the de-centralist tendency. Students working on the community projects and on campuses have been faced with practical problems of democracy and have developed a philosophy of basic, participatory democracy.

They have also developed an aversion to non-active "leaders", and a philosophy of action which tends to view action and the nature of that action—means—as more important than results or ends. Consequently, there are indications that instead of becoming a national organization along traditional lines, SUPA will tend to be more like an association or federation of projects.

This tendency, if it is followed, will probably affect relationships between SUPA and other organizations, particularly student councils and Canadian Union of Students. Until now the relation between SUPA and these organizations has been primarily of an institutional nature, which meant that on each campus and on the national level each organization had to define its relationship to the other. In many cases this produced conflicts.

A much healthier relationship existed between SUPA members and the Alma Mater Society at Queen's University, where SUPA members

spent much of their time preparing for the Kingston Community Project. In this case, the Queen's SUPA members were primarily a group of student activists preparing for a specific task. They and the AMS were able to enjoy meaningful and fruitful relations in terms of the KCP, probably an important factor in the project's success.

In a similar manner, U of T SUPA members were able to work far more fruitfully with the Students' Administrative Council when both were concerned with common and specific issues. The reason for this situation is probably that when two organizations attempt to co-exist on an institutional basis, conflicts are created by actions and policies of one or the other groups. But when they only attempt to come together for a specific purpose the only question is whether they will or will not cooperate for that purpose.

A recently published SUPA pamphlet asked: "If not us, who; if not now, when? The eighty students working on these (summer) projects have a belief and a commitment to the future of man. They believe in the possibility of creating a better world—a world without war, poverty and discrimination. They believe, without thinking that they have all the answers, that the way to make a better world is to work actively for it. These students believe they have a personal obligation to undertake this work, not leave it to someone else, and they believe they must do it now, not later."

Immediately following the CUS Congress, the members of the SUPA projects met for eight days at a fall training institute. The institute was an evaluation, training and planning session devoted to analyzing the summer's work, providing basic skills for future work and considering methods and means of extending the projects to a larger number of students and a larger section of the community.

At Revolution's Edge

(Editor's Note: The following is the first part of a two-part series on the Quebec students and student syndicalism, written by Richard Guay, vice-president aux affaires publiques, Union Generale des Etudiants du Quebec (UGEQ).)

By RICHARD GUAY

Quebec stands today on the edge of a revolution—a revolution that will be political, social and economic. The goals to be obtained are slowly defining themselves and the progressive forces in this state are getting ready to face up to this challenge and bring about a new society that will transform Quebec. This new society will, it is hoped, put Quebec on the forefront of modern states in this world and create a social context that will be just for everyone, but particularly for the economically needy and underprivileged; it will bring forth a higher degree of learning and accentuate the development and the accessibility of a culture that is distinctly ours, a culture that has manifested itself strongly in the past few years. In short, it will set new standards in the concept of organized society; a society established on a strong and national base that will set about a new humanism strongly accentuated with a positive approach to internationalism. In this context, the student body is being called upon to stimulate and participate actively to the coming about of this new society, through individual action and through the student associations.

It appears quite clear that to do this, we will need new political structures and that this need is also manifest at every other level. The fact that we have concepts of student action wholly different from those of Canada, the fact that we have a personality which is ours and the fact that the goals we seek will inevitably come into conflict with the present state of affairs in Canada are three major reasons why the students of Quebec needed their own structures—thus: UGEQ (Union Generale des Etudiants du Quebec). We found it impossible to do these things within a framework dominated by others (CUS) and serving interests that were not necessarily ours.

All of this is the logical end of what is commonly known as the quiet revolution, which is not a revolution but a mere catching up period to the minimum standards for a state in this age.

And, in the context of this period, the student class in Quebec is transforming itself in a radical way. No longer is the student intended to be a carefree individual, totally irresponsible to society and pursuing his daily activities in a given setting (campus), adjacent to society, but not in it; the attitude of the student in the corporatist sense (and most

student associations in Canada and the U.S.A. are corporations) reminds me of the "MAD" character: "What? me worry?" and is, to my mind, just as ridiculous as the magazine and its creators. The typical student and his association in this sense is a passive consumer of what his professors teach him during a given number of years, never questioning what he is being fed and never participating in the elaboration of programs and subjects that he is to study and learn. And this academically passive attitude is also evident in the social and political attitudes that the student and his association have. In this context, the student is not looked upon as a citizen but as a privileged member of society who is isolated from this society to obtain a certain theoretical competence; from there he goes back to society not knowing what it is like, completely unaware of its fundamental problems and happy in his selfish pursuit of profit; he will join a professional corporation to make sure that these profits are well kept and that as long as he and his fellow professionals are happy and smiling, then the whole world is happy and smiling. Therefore, this "what, me worry?" attitude that was his during his student days remains with him for the rest of his life. He is the contented bourgeois. We can then conclude that the solution lies at the formative stage; if an individual, while he is learning the elements of this future activity does not learn to act as a responsible, courageous and socially conscious citizen in these years during which he is shaping himself, he will not do so afterwards when his main interest will be to use the tools that he received passively to further his own private goals.

It is this kind of situation that, pushed to the extremes, has given way to revolutions throughout the world: the "what, me worry?" attitude and the pursuit of private power and profit of the nobility gave way to the French and Russian Revolutions. The same situation has been found in Cuba and China where nobility was replaced by a small group of imperialist money makers whose attitude prompted the revolutions in these countries.

We will not wait for this situation to reach an extreme; we aim to correct social inequities while we can still do it in a bloodless revolution.

There is no simple trick to it and there is no overnight solution to such a complex problem. Such a transformation is being brought about by the application of a new theory of student action that differs completely from the previous course that was ours and which remains that of many Canadian and American students. This new theory is called student syndicalism.

Salud, Lucien

(Reprinted from the McGill Daily)

To have become a folk hero at the age of fifty is a considerable feat; to have evaded at least four police forces for several months, to have counted among your contacts the elected representatives of the Canadian Government and to have been instrumental in almost bringing it to its knees puts you into the top category immediately. It is little wonder that *Cité Libre*, an eminently respectable magazine, recently saw fit to compare you with Arsene Lupin, the famed "gentleman cambrioleur." The comparison is justified.

The thought of your sitting within spitting distance of City Hall, drinking long, cool drinks and settling back with a copy of *The Financial Times*, while all around you police agents swarmed like flies, is certainly a piquant one. The last time we saw you, you looked fit and

sun-tanned, waving goodbye to the sympathetic stenographers who cheered you as the State wafted you off to the Deep South—the most recent and most scandalous example of brain drain.

We understand that since that time you have had differences of opinion with the jury on the whole question of what kind of opiates people should be allowed to indulge in; we would merely comment that you seemed to us to be providing a service for which there must have been a considerable demand. And as far as we can establish, your particular brand was not conducive to cancer.

It may be that we will still not see you again for some time; rest assured, however, that your reputation is by now firmly established. You have joined the Immortals. It may be little consolation to you but had you been alive in a less critical age, you might very well have become a Senator.