

# Don't Talk - It Might Hurt The Cause

by Stephen Kimber

Not unexpectedly, the Canadian Union of Students was clobbered by a three to two margin in last week's campus wide referendum. It fell with only a quarter of the electorate going to the polls to cast ballots, and in a campaign that failed to get off the ground.

The policy of the anti-CUS faction led by Council President Bruce Gillis was to avoid discussion of substantive issues, and rely instead on personal contact, where it would be easier to rekindle the fires of discontent stirred by the CUS Congress two years ago. At that time, the National Liberation Front was given support by CUS.

The tone for the referenda battles at both U. of T. and Dalhousie was set in a letter to Gillis dated September 22nd from Jon Levin of the University of Toronto. Levin told Gillis: "We shall avoid special meetings called to discuss CUS," and so little could be expected from the open meetings on CUS at Dalhousie. The anti-CUS faction had decided that open discussion of the issues was politically unwise.

The actual work to pull Dalhousie out of the national union began last spring with Gillis' election to the Presidency. In his election platform the candidate declared: "if we cannot achieve some redirection at the next Congress, we will hold a referendum and advise leaving CUS."

Gillis went to the April Rebuilding Congress convinced that there could be no redirection of CUS, according to at least one observer there, Dalhousie student Jock MacKay, later elected Field Worker for CUS in the Atlantic provinces. Gillis, he said in a letter to Council members, had played little part in the work of the Rebuilding Conference.

The President also procrastinated until it was impossible for the Council as a whole to have any say in the selection of delegates, to the August Conference. Therefore it was an arbitrary Presidential decision and most of the delegates, with the exception of a Gazette reporter and the Graduate Students representative, were hand picked. However, even this ploy failed, when the delegates rejected a Gillis proposal for the dismemberment of CUS and the formation of a national federation.

Early in June, Gillis began to hatch his Federation scheme in letters to people like Gus Abols, President of the Student Council at the University of Toronto, Fraser Hodge of the University of British Columbia, Ervin Epp of Vancouver City College, and Martin Shapiro of McGill.

The first thoughts were merely voices in opposition to CUS, but by the time of the national Congress in August, Gillis had obviously decided to press for an alternative to CUS. His alternative was a Canadian Students Federation, a loose association of Student Councils which would not take political stands on things like the housing problem or other issues.

The Constitution was drafted at the Congress and a press release prepared, implicating the universities of Dalhousie,

Toronto, McGill, and U.B.C.

Delegates from Toronto and Dalhousie led their own revolt against Gillis and Abols, disassociating themselves from the grandiose federation. The U. of T. delegation censured Abols for his actions.

Back at Dalhousie in the fall, Gillis himself had to fight against a censure motion sponsored by Grad Reps Larry Fredericks and Judi Park.

A victory in the censure battle added impetus to the CUS war. Gillis generally followed the lead of U. of T. and stayed out of debate on the issue. He did attempt however, late in the campaign, to bring in Gus Abols from U. of T. to address an anti-CUS rally. Gillis says that the money for the Abols visit would likely have come from the Political Affairs Secretary's budgetary allotment. At the moment there is no Political Affairs Secretary. Abols however, had another engagement and couldn't make it.

Gillis also used other techniques and technicalities to advantage. An omission from the regulations for the referendum election enabled Gillis to put out campaign literature on polling day. It is customary election procedure that all campaigning stop 24 hours before election day.

Gillis' pamphlet contained a number of half-truths and untruths in it. He claimed that CUS had refused to allow Quebec universities to join the organization - an obvious distortion of fact (Martin Shapiro from McGill, one of the non-members from Quebec, was refused voting privileges at the Congress when he persistently interrupted the business of the Congress. He was refused permission to speak or vote by the entire plenary.)

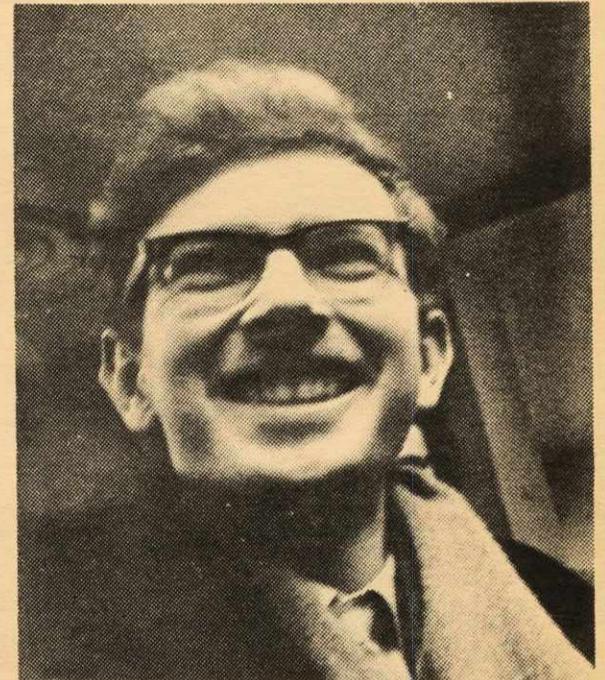
Gillis also claimed that CUS had refused to make itself representative in a democratic fashion while in actual fact, democracy in any national union, would presuppose a democratic local union. This, then, is Mr. Gillis' task.

A third argument in the pamphlet which supporters of CUS were not given time to refute, was that CUS had supported the rioters at Sir George, another blatant distortion of the facts, which even a cursory look at the CUS press release on Sir George will show.

Gillis didn't deny authorship of the pamphlet and told several Gazette staffers that it had been authorized by the Treasurer of the Student Union. Don Robart, the Treasurer, tells another story. "I didn't know anything about it," he claimed. Gillis then denied the original answer and refused to answer the question of who would foot the bill for the pamphlet.

Several members of the CUS Committee, when contacted by the Gazette, said they knew nothing about the pamphlet and didn't expect that it would come out of their budget.

Gillis also denied providing Canadian Press with an erroneous and misleading story on the results of last week's referendum, but a spokesman for Canadian Press said that their information came from "the President of the Student Council."



The story claimed that 722 Dalhousie students had voted to get out of CUS - the actual figure was 633. The story also noted that Dalhousie delegates to the CUS Congress at the Lakehead had refused to commit Dalhousie to the national union. In fact they were bound by a legal decision, of the union lawyers.

Gillis had purposely delayed showing delegates the letter to eliminate the possibility of any confrontation after the executive had voted to commit Dalhousie to the Canadian Union of Students for the coming year.

Gillis said the referendum "went as I expected", but refused to say where Dalhousie would go from here. He refused to say whether he had yet been in contact with Gus Abols about formation of a Canadian Students Federation, and didn't seem inclined to discuss the matter at all. On election night, he apparently felt the results of so little importance that he went to see a movie - "The Battle of Britain" rather than wait to see what happened.

One CUS supporter told the Gazette that the "Battle of Britain" may have a change of venue, if things continue the way they have been going.

# Why Hast Thou Forsaken Us?

by Bev Yeadon

It is, or should be, evident to everyone that our president has, indeed, forsaken us. Before I say how I have come to this conclu-



sion let me make it clear that my criticism of Bruce Gillis is not political (although we differ on that score) or malicious. I do not get particular joy in putting people down just for kicks. Although I never agreed with Bruce politically, I had respect for his integrity but it seems that I was mistaken. Here's why:

-At the CUS Congress in September, Bruce stated that he was not speaking for the students of Dalhousie and then proceeded, against the wishes of the other delegates, to make definite moves to undermine CUS.

-He deliberately kept students in the dark about the possible merits and benefits of CUS by neglecting to have distributed any CUS literature that arrived in his office.

-He distributed, contrary to custom, campaign literature on polling day advising the students to vote against CUS. This move was not legally wrong since the law only prohibits the distribution of campaign material on an Election Day and this was not an "Election" this was a "Referendum".

-This paper was not only biased but a complete misrepresentation of facts. Some points mentioned in the paper were: 1) "has in effect encouraged Quebec to leave Canada"... we suggest that Mr. Gillis re-read the CUS motion concerning this. 2) "supported the rioters at Sir George Williams"... we suggest that he also re-read the CUS press release. and 3) "has an executive who are mostly none students"... if a representative was elected to CUS from Dalhousie, for instance, it would be difficult for him to serve on the executive in Ottawa, which

is a full-time job, and commute to classes at the same time.

-When asked where he obtained authorization for the use of council funds for this enterprise he said from the Treasurer of the Student Council. The Treasurer, when contacted, denied this.

-He denied releasing the results of the Referendum to the Canadian Press which wrongly stated the vote as 722-411 opposed to CUS instead of the actual vote of 633-411.

-The Canadian Press said that it received the information from "the President of the Student Council"... whoever he is.

-Bruce was requested by council to return the George Report to the Senate Committee as unsatisfactory and instead he told Senate that the Council had found the report satisfactory "given the present structure of the University"... whatever that means.

-He intimated that Dalhousie was not interested in participating in the demonstration at the International Airport protesting the U.S. bomb-testing. Although he was contacted and asked to inform the students about the demonstration, he did not do so.

It seems funny that people who are presumably interested enough in Student affairs to elect a Council and President should pay so little attention to their actions. Students who refuse to assume this responsibility deserve everything they get and I have no doubt that Bruce has some very interesting entertainment in store for us in the next 6 1/2 months.

# CUS Crushed - Dal Drops

by Andrew Cochran

Only slightly over one-quarter of the student body turned out to show their opinion on Dalhousie's participation in the Canadian Union of Students. Out of 4100 full-time registered students, approximately 1200 voted in last week's referendum on whether or not Dal should re-enter CUS.

At one poll - Dentistry Building - in one afternoon, only one student marked his ballot, and according to reports, that was after persuasion.

Results of the two-day balloting were 633 not to rejoin the national student organization, 411 in favor, and 237 spoiled ballots. (A spoiled ballot, in the ruling of the Elections Committee, was one that was not distinguishable, or one marked with a check-mark instead of an "X").

Despite the high incidence of rejected ballots, their inclusion in the tally would not have affected the final decision. Student Union President Bruce Gillis reacted to the re-

sults by saying, "I'm pleased - it was what I expected". Meanwhile Grad Council President Larry Katz, had more to say on the outcome: "I'm disappointed at the small turnout... the rejection of the national student organization has set back the cause of student's rights five years." Vice-President Derryn Crowston generally echoed Gillis' remarks.

Meanwhile voting on the matter at other campuses effectively spelt the demise of CUS. At Carleton University in Ottawa, students voted two-to-one to opt-out of the organization. At the University of Toronto, out of about 25,000 students, 5,434 were in favor of getting out, and 2,222 voted to retain membership.

Already there are rumblings of a replacement for CUS, but one student voiced the opinion of many in saying, "Now that a national union has been rejected, we should forget about a string of 'rebuilding conferences' for a substitute, and concentrate on rebuilding our own union." Amen.



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