



photo by Martin Braslin

# gateway

Thursday, October 7, 1982

Excuse number 941....

"I couldn't make it tonight. I had to study for my rectal examination."

## Calgary students plan rent strike

by Richard Watts

Students living in family residences at the University of Calgary will hold a rent strike next month.

On September 29th the students living in Varsity Court voted almost unanimously (one vote less) to withhold payment of their November rent.

The money will be held in trust for a period of two weeks at the end of which it will be paid to U of C's housing authorities. The interest gathered in that time will either be paid back to the students

or set aside to pay any legal fees incurred during the strike.

Says Paul Eagan, chairperson of the Varsity Courts General Council, "What we are trying to do is to get the Board of Governors to re-examine our position by generating some public sympathy."

The rent strike comes in response to a new policy of the U of C housing authorities to pool the management of all student housing. Varsity Courts used to operate on a separate break-even budget.

Under the new policy residents of Varsity Courts can expect a rent increase of 74-97 percent next September. Residents the rent at Varsity Courts is currently \$305 per month for a two bedroom unit.

"It used to be a co-operative situation where the residents could sit down with management and discuss the budget and rent increases making sure the budget always ran broke even," says Eagan.

Eagan continued, "It was entirely co-operative, we kept the

rent down by doing our own maintenance, shovelling snow, cutting the grass and that kind of general upkeep and after the rent goes up we'll be expected to continue doing that."

The rent increase at Varsity Courts means that the residences will generate a profit \$150 per month of which will go to subsidize the single student residences.

To complain about the new policy of pooling the management of student residences the residents of Varsity Courts went to the U of C Board of Governors, who set up an ad hoc committee to examine the issue.

"On September 23 we got a response from the Board of Governors, they said they would recommend our rent be decreased by two or three dollars which was like a slap in the face," says Eagan.

The new policy of pooling the management of the university residences comes after the decision by the university to build a new housing complex.

It was decided that rents in the single student dwellings would have to be raised to help pay for the new buildings.

In deciding how much single student housing should cost, the university examined the rent and

housing facilities at other universities.

However, in deciding the rent increase for Varsity Courts the housing authorities examined commercial apartments in the city of Calgary.

"That's looking at two completely different things, commercial apartments are naturally going to be higher than university residences," says Eagan.

Eagan also pointed out that no new family residences are being built, even though the need is greater than the need for more single student dwelling.

"There are 18 applicants for every place in the single student swelling but there are 2.5 families on campus for every apartment in Varsity Courts," says Eagan.

Eagan says that even with the rent increase, Varsity Courts will be filled because the rent will still be approximately 10 percent lower than commercial rents.

"But it is such a departure from the philosophy of running break even co-op housing for the 213 men, women and children who live there," says Eagan.

Eagan concluded, "Management is sticking it to us and the Board of Governors is not fulfilling their role as a watchdog for management."

## McGill debates massacre

MONTREAL (CUP) — The recent massacre of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon sparked a free-for-all debate on McGill University grounds September 24.

One hundred and fifty people witnessed students arguing for more than three hours, with several participants shouting and shoving each other.

According to witnesses, the fracas began when several people confronted a woman distributing allegedly antisemitic literature in front of a McGill building. A debate began and people quickly formed sides.

According to one person, the Israeli government should be held responsible for the slaughter.

"The government of Menachem Begin (prime minister) and Ariel Sharon (defence minister) should be overthrown," he said.

"Jews, stop supporting Begin with your dollars," he said, adding (that) Canadian and American

Jews should withdraw support from a government that murders civilians.

Another student, who said he was an American Jew, claimed Begin was a fascist.

"We must speak out against fascism wherever we see it," he said. "Begin should be tried as a war criminal."

"Now we've shown that we can murder like the Germans, the Chileans or the Americans. Begin has proved that Jews can kill like everyone else. There is no difference, we are like them and we have a lot to answer for," he said.

One student claimed the Israeli's actions in the invasion of Beirut bordered on fascism, although the Israelis were still respected because of their democratic system of government.

"That Begin will not step down proves he is a fascist, and should be treated as such," said the

student.

A supporter of the invasion of Lebanon said Israel is only fighting a war to defend its existence. "(PLO leader) Yasser Arafat wants to push Israel into the sea," he said.

"If we don't destroy them (the PLO), then they will destroy Israel," said another participant.

One student said Israel should not negotiate a peace settlement with the PLO. Another said the Israeli government should negotiate with the Palestinians but not the PLO.

At least one student claimed Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the West Bank do not feel that the PLO represents their interests.

The debate is the second incident at McGill sparked by the recent massacre. Earlier that week swastikas equated with the Star of David and the word Palestine were spray-painted on several McGill buildings.

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