

Uneasy Council avoids question



Oscar Ammar and Robert Greenhill square off over SU entering international politics

by Richard Watts

A motion calling upon the Students' Union to publicly denounce Israel and the Christian Phalangists was presented to Students' Council.

The motion was presented Tuesday night by Council members Dwayne Chomyn and Oscar Ammar as a denunciation of the massacres at the Chatilla and Sabra refugee camps.

The motion also called upon Israel to "cease its unlawful occupation of West, Beirut and Lebanon, allowing all citizens of the world to live in peace and prosperity."

The motion was tabled due to lack of time.

Outside the Council chamber Brian Wolfman, a member of Hillel, the Jewish students' association, attempted to discuss the motion with some council members.

Wolfman is currently circulating a petition denouncing the motion on the grounds that the Students' Union has no right

playing spokesman for the politics of the student body.

Wolfman says the response to the petition has been "very good."

Wolfman felt for the sake of integrity he had to make his biases known but his objections to the motion stemmed from other considerations.

"Yes I have biases as do Ammar and Chomyn but those biases aside I don't think that the Students' Union is the place to discuss these sort of political issues," said Wolfman.

Wolfman continued, "If we condemn this massacre we have to condemn all murders and massacres otherwise we're being selective in our massacres."

Chomyn responded that the motion was not totally political.

"This is a motion on humanitarian grounds not totally on political grounds, we have to at least make a statement," said Chomyn.

To the criticism that Students' Council is not a forum for international politics Chomyn

responded, "My vision of the Students' Union is much broader than the administration of the organization itself. I think as an institution devoted to education and enlightenment it is our duty to bring these things into higher profile in order to promote discussion and debate."

Chomyn also felt bringing forward this motion now had more to do with the fact that it has happened recently rather than any political biases on his part.

But to that Wolfman replied, "Atrocities occur all the time, if we support this motion then we must condemn others otherwise we are not being truly representative of all students on campus."

Both Chomyn and Wolfman individually expressed concerns that the question could polarize the Arab and Jewish elements within the student body. Both individuals deplored the idea of this motion resulting in open Arab-Jewish hostility.

Said Chomyn, "I think we can discuss this issue as Canadians concerned over and aware of what

is going on in the world."

Said Wolfman, "I don't want to see any kind of hostility breaking out. I'm trying desperately to put aside my biases and I think it is important that we all do this and look at this issue as members of the Students' Union."

What little time Students' Council did have to discuss the motion before the meeting ended was lost in procedural wrangling.

Council member John Koch challenged the motion on the grounds that it was unconstitutional, that it did not comply with the Purpose of the Students' Union as outlined in the SU constitution.

The chair ruled that it was, at which point Koch challenged the chair. The challenge was defeated by a tie vote since procedure required a two thirds majority.

SU President also had objections on constitutional grounds saying that it represented a conflict of interest, Ammar being president of the Arab Students' Association.

Ammar responded, "I would like to announce that as of this afternoon I have resigned as president of the Arab Students' Association."

After rolling his eyes and shaking his head Greenhill attempted to press home the attack stating that Ammar was still a member or still had ties with the Arab Students' Association.

Ammar complained, "I told you that I resigned this afternoon."

Unwilling to give up the attack Greenhill asked pointedly, "Are you still a member of the Arab Students' Association?"

By now visibly angry Ammar replied, "No I am not a member, and yes I still have some ties to that organization because I am an Arab. But I told you already I resigned."

Shortly after this the motion was tabled due to lack of time.

Chomyn disapproved of the whole business of arguing over procedures.

"I'm getting tired of the whole executive attempting to defeat motions with parliamentary procedure," says Chomyn.

Chomyn continued, "This motion is not an isolated case, every time the Executive disapproves of something going through Council they refer to the book and attempt to tie it up in rigid procedure."

Dr. John Forster, Dean of Graduate Studies, died last week.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, October 3rd at 3:00 pm in the fourth floor lounge of Education North.

In lieu of flowers donations may be sent to the Library Memorial Book Fund.

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