

Administrators frustrate students

by Sharon MacDonald

Students must still contend with the condescension and paternalism of university administrators according to reports from this summer's conference of the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC). An organization of university administrators, the AUCC has for the last four years refused to recognize the National Union of Students (NUS) as the official voice of Canadian students. The AUCC has justified this position by maintaining that it represents students through its student caucus. This position however has been challenged by the caucus itself.

At the last AUCC conference the students denounced the AUCC "as an organization of university administrators . . . representative only of university administrators" and voted unanimously to disband the student caucus. When the motion was presented to the AUCC plenary however, the administrators used their numerical advantage to table the motion.

John Lefebvre, president of the University of Calgary Student Union, says the AUCC's actions indicate that it treats students with condescension. According to Lefebvre "the AUCC is the last bastion of paternalism towards students." "If the point is made strong enough, eventually even that organization

will come to see students as a vital and integral portion of the community and not children to be appeased by tokenism and plane tickets."

For the last three years the NUS has protested the AUCC's actions by officially boycotting its conferences. Although the boycott has been successful (of NUS' 35 members only Dalhousie and Waterloo attended the last conference), Lefebvre thinks that the AUCC "will continue to find students who will capitulate our real interests and claim they represent us unless the association's real character is understood and students object firmly."

Since the motion to disband the student caucus was tabled the AUCC has sent letters to student unions across the country to poll opinions and suggestions on the future of the student caucus.

Dalhousie Student Union president Mike Power, who represented Dalhousie students at the latest AUCC conference, made himself unavailable for comment on the question of student representation within the association.

The official NUS position adopted at its last conference however calls for the dissolution of the student caucus and the establishment of tri-partite negotiations between the AUCC, NUS and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT).

Students banned from meeting

CALGARY (CUP)—Members of the Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) and the National Union of Students (NUS) were prevented from sitting in on a private meeting of the Canada Student Loans Plenary Group in Calgary September 13.

FAS executive member John Graham said "we're concerned about secrecy and we're concerned about the Canada Student Loans Program."

On September 13, FAS members Graham, Blair Redlin, Lake Sagaris and NUS fieldworker Jeff Parr attempted to enter the downtown meeting, but were refused entry by plenary chairperson Claude Passy.

Graham said they could hear the door being locked from the inside as they entered the outer office.

An impromptu news conference followed at which the students outlined their reasons for objecting to the plenary meeting.

NUS would like to see the meeting opened rather than private, and elected officials as members rather than hired

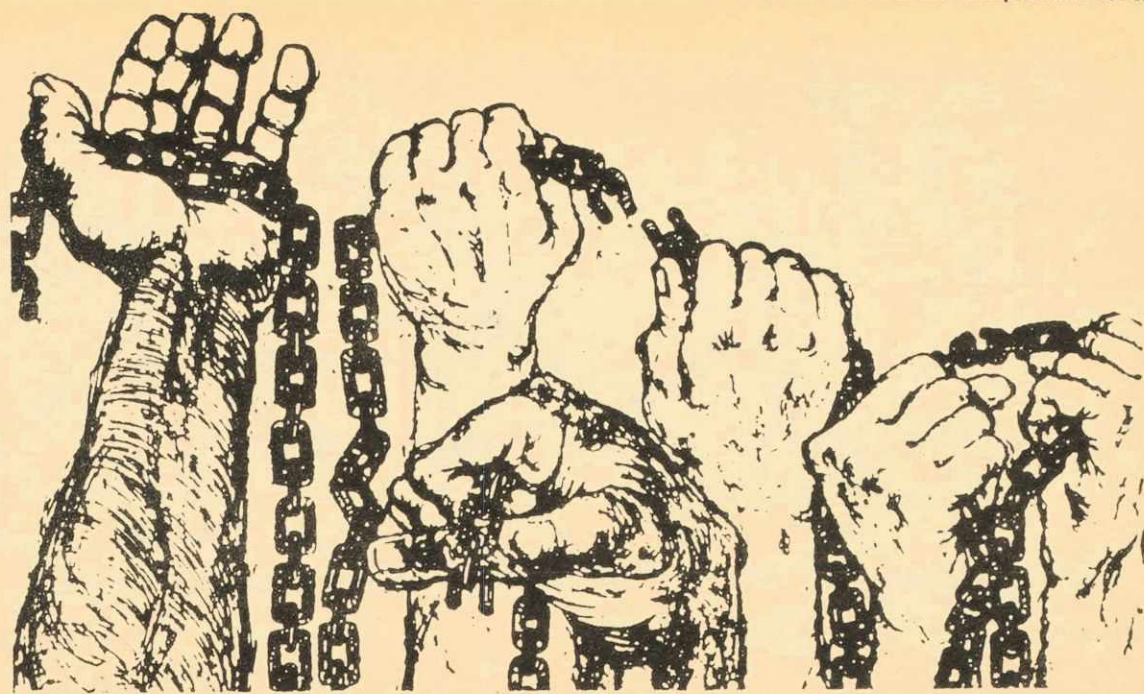
civil servants. "We would like to have persons making those decisions (about student loans) responsible to the electorate", said Graham.

In addition, NUS said the federal government should have greater control over provincial loans and grant programs as a way of standardizing the student loan program.

NUS also expressed concern about decreasing federal and provincial budget allotments for social services, particularly post-secondary education, while costs continue to rise. "NUS stands firmly opposed to governments' attempts to check economic recession through social service cut-backs," states the brief.

Also advocated was an extension of the loan pay-back period. The disparity in the loan/grant ratio was also found objectionable.

With the support of the local ad hoc "Education as a right" committee, NUS and FAS continued picketing the meeting on September 14, passing out leaflets to people on the streets. Reaction was generally favourable, according to the protesters.



ZANU may lose grant

CALGARY (CUP)—A \$1,000 grant from a student-supported charitable fund at the University of Calgary to the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) may never reach the black liberation group.

The donation, which has been a source of controversy for the students' association since it was first made in June, may be rescinded on a constitutional technicality.

"The Committee's [the students' union charitable fund's] . . . decision to fund ZANU may have been made in somewhat too liberal a context to satisfy the constitutional stipulation that disbursements be made to 'projects of a developmental, charitable, or relief nature,'" according to students' union president John Lefebvre.

The association's finance vice-president Jeff Proudfoot had repeatedly refused to sign

the cheque on the grounds that there was no way to ensure the money would be spent by ZANU for relief purposes.

"I'm afraid this money will end up in the arms market of Moscow," Proudfoot said.

ZANU, which has been fighting Ian Smith's white supremacist regime in Rhodesia since 1972, had requested the money for medicine and for refugee relief.

Although Lefebvre signed the cheque, he said he did so more out of duty and a sense of obligation to the constitution than out of support for ZANU. He now feels Proudfoot should not sign the cheque.

The cheque requires the signatures of both Lefebvre and Proudfoot.

By refusing to co-sign the cheque, Proudfoot had directly violated the students' asso-

ciation constitution and faced possible impeachment. The Review Board, judiciary body of the students' association, had several times ruled in favour of the original decision to fund ZANU, and in August had informed Proudfoot that it would not entertain any more appeals unless new evidence was forthcoming.

The technicality was discovered after a review of the Committee's minutes by the students' association executive early in September. The Review Board is expected to make a final decision within the next two weeks.

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