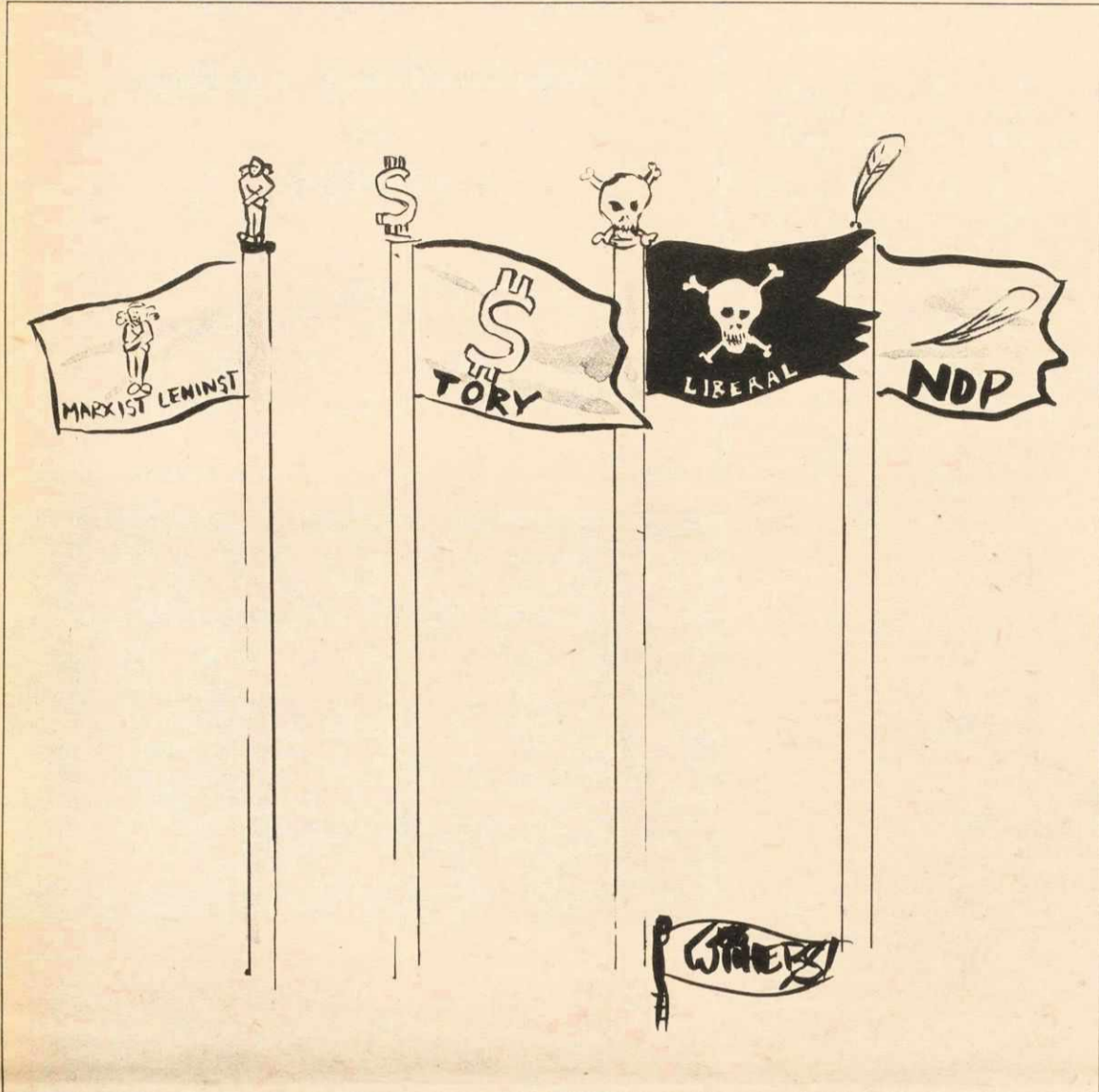


The good, the bad and the ugly — Dal's political parties



by Arnold Mosher

Political parties at Dalhousie offer something for everyone, from radical politics to old-line parties.

The parties range from the right wing Progressive Conservative Youth Federation (PCYF), to extreme left parties like the Canadian Student Movement (CSM) of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) CPC (ML).

From these, the most influential at Dalhousie, as judged from the last Federal election returns from the constituency of Halifax South, are the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives, and New Democrats.

Arising this year are special youth branches of the two main-line parties: the PCs and Liberals.

The Progressive Conservatives

The PCs have both an organization in the Law School and a group for all other Dalhousie students, both of which are Branches of the PCYF.

Ted Foley, leader of the Dalhousie branch of the PCYF, says that while there are a lot of "Tory sympathizers" at Dalhousie, but that there is a stigma attached to the party. He said the newly formed PCYF group is an attempt to change the concept of the PC party in the eyes of students, and also to change some of the views of the party itself.

Foley said that through PCYF policy Committees, which are supposed to meet regularly with the provincial cabinet, students will have a direct input into government.

As for the sudden rise of the PCYF, Foley stated that the falling student support for the PCs in the last Federal election was an impetus in its creation.

Foley said that until the policy committees had laid out policy he could not state the position of the PCYF on various issues, except that a change in the position on women's rights was hoped for.

The PCYF claims to have support of 80 law students, and 30 students from the rest of Dalhousie.

The Liberals

The Liberals also have formed a student party across Nova Scotia, known as the Young Liberals.

Tom Regan, President of the Liberal Youth Commission, says the basis of the Young Liberals platform is to shape the Liberal party through the action of youth.

Regan says the liberal party is in a stage of "tearing apart" and students are needed to have a hand in rebuilding.

The basic philosophy of the party is, as he sees it, that the action of the government should be in response to what society needs.

The Young Liberals are also setting up a policy convention, so Regan could not say much about their policy, however he did emphasize the need for a community orientation to the party.

Regan also said he would like to see more people get involved in politics and "not just be apathetic".

The young Liberals also, says Regan, supports the Stu-

dent Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) in its policy decisions.

The New Democrats

The NDP, says Bill White, spokesperson for the party on campus, does not have a special youth movement at Dalhousie. White says the NDP has around 150 card carrying members at Dalhousie, these belonging to the NDP party proper.

The party philosophy is that of centralized planning for "eradication" of major social anomalies, all within the capitalist system.

White says the NDP "champions" students rights and works closely with the National Union of Students (NUS) to that end.

One key issue affecting students the NDP is concerned about is block funding. White

says that if the Federal government just gives funding to the provinces in a lump sum, the provinces can spend the funding as it sees fit which means funding will decrease for education.

Unemployment insurance, says White, should also be applied to students, especially considering the growing student unemployment.

The NDP has historically supported free tuition in post secondary education, and even though this is a period of restraint, "tightening the purse string" is no solution, says White.

In Struggle

In Struggle is a Marxian-Leninist party with connections with Dalhousie students.

In Struggle, says Jack Van Buren, a spokesperson for the Halifax branch of the party, has been involved in such student issues as the cleaner's strike of 1978-79, and tuition fee increases.

Van Buren says the Dalhousie cleaners trike was a prime example of administration trying to divide workers and students. It is important for students, says Van Buren, to get involved in such issues because when students have to fight education cutbacks they need support from people who have been in a similar situation.

To further student interest in issues like international politics, In Struggle supports speakers to come to campus. The party expects to have a speaker who has been in Iran, and another from El Salvador.

Van Buren says that although In Struggle is a small organization there are a lot of people who support certain issues the party takes, issues that might not be brought up by other parties.

The Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist)

The Canadian Student Movement (CSM) of the CPC(ML) at Dalhousie is a Marxist-Leninist party with ties across Canada.

The CPC(ML) is a party that voices the interest of the working class, says Charles Spurr, local leader of the party.

The CSM tries to organize students across Canada such action as committees against "racist and fascist violence", like Klu Klux Klan recruiting. The party plans to have a hotline to receive complaints of racism across Canada.

The CSM also tries to fight the government policy of cutbacks in educational funding. Spurr says that the government evidently sees education as being less profitable and so invests instead in industry.

To fight the cutbacks in education, Spurr says that students should organize "fee-hike strikes" in which students refuse to pay the increases in tuition.

The Dalhousie CSM has become part of university life and has provided contentious ideas for discussion, says Spurr.

Spurr would not say how many people are in the CSM at Dalhousie.

The Workers Communist Party (WCP)

Edward Kravitz, spokesperson for the WCP, says the party is a working peoples' party "fighting for socialism" in Canada.

The "bread and butter" issues are not the only thing the WCP is interested in, says Kravitz, international problems must also be dealt with. He feels a similar attitude should be taken by students.

The WCP has sent delegates to NUS conferences, and Kravitz feels students must be more vocal in opposing such things as government cutbacks in education. He says the WCP is pushing student councils to fight the government with more than just briefs.

Kravitz said student unemployment is another problem that is directly related to government disinterest in student affairs.

The WCP is in the process of organizing a student movement at Dalhousie and the party has plans to bring speakers to Dalhousie who have travelled in Zimbabwe and Eritrea.

The WCP has, according to Kravitz, up to 40 people in Halifax.



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