

"LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE"

Meeting in emergency session last Sunday night, without President Bruce Gillis, Student Council voted 12 to 4 to continue to allow groups to sell literature in the lobby of the SUB.

The decision came on the heels of a confrontation between students supporting the Dalhousie Student Movement and campus police and a threatened confrontation last Monday between DSM and Commerce students.

The difficulty developed when the radical Student Movement was refused permission to sell their literature in the SUB, ostensibly because of complaints about the literature sale in the building. SUB Affairs Secretary Dave Stevenson later admitted that a number of the fifteen to twenty complaints were "political". "They didn't want communists selling in the building."

However the official reason given for the ban, which extended to all groups on campus, was the fear that the SUB would be turned into a "supermarket." Yet, John Graham, Student Union General Manager, in an informal conversation with members of the Gazette staff weeks before the incident said that the lobby was purposely planned to allow for displays and distribution of ideas.

"We made it that large for just that purpose," he said, adding that "it's a shame that it hasn't been used enough in that way."

Therefore when Dave Stevenson ordered the ban in the lobby on literature sales, he aroused the ire of a number of campus groups including the Dal NDY and the DSM, both of whom distribute literature at the tables. On Thursday, members of DSM defied the ban setting up a literature table in the foyer, but were expelled bodily from the building by three campus policemen. They were not immediately permitted back into the building and a meeting of concerned students was held without representatives of the DSM.

Nothing was resolved in the hour long meeting although Stevenson and Student Union President Bruce Gillis put forward a number of reasons for expelling the students who were selling literature from the SUB.

Besides the supermarket theory, Gillis and Stevenson argued that the tables represented an invasion of privacy and the number of complaints registered in one week constituted massive student support. There were fifteen complaints, although none of them were in writing.

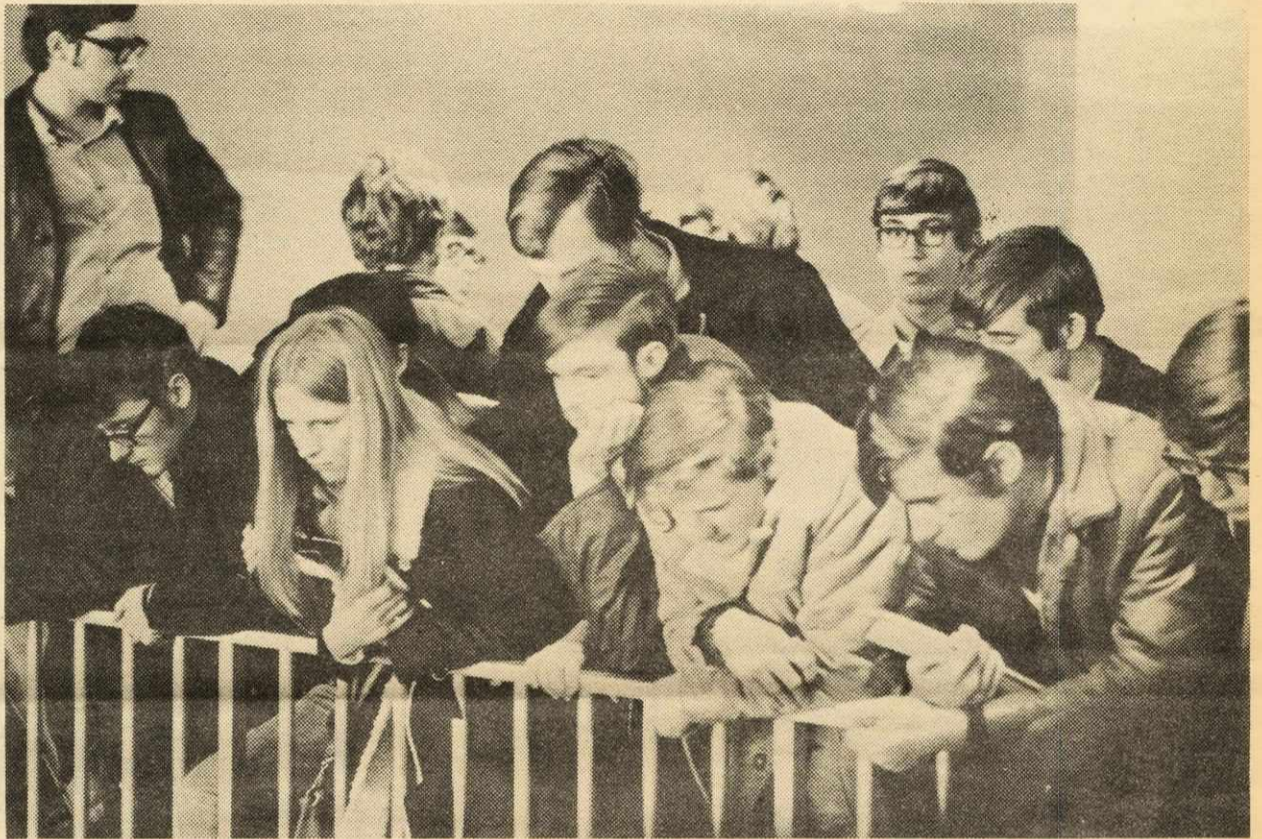
At a night meeting, Thursday, Dalhousie New Democratic Youth voted to support the right of DSM, to sell their literature, and organized to prevent them from being thrown out.

Before an assembled crowd of close to 300 students in the foyer of the SUB, on Friday, campus police acting on orders moved in to break up a group of NDY and others who ringed the table to protect DSM.

Meeting resistance from students, the police withdrew and refused to break up the crowd.

Dave Bright, the Chief of Campus Police said later that it was not the function of campus police to fight other students and added that their involvement in such a volatile situation would have created a "bloodbath."

In an impromptu meeting, following the withdrawal of the campus police force, Kim Cameron called on students to support the right of groups to distribute literature in the SUB. He charged that suppression of the literature was



"Don't they have mothers?" "Go back to Red China and turn Green" "All that dirty hair" "Fucking Foreigner" "I hope those commies get their heads kicked in" "Blood! Blood! WE WANT BLOOD MASH HIM! BASH HIM! SMASH HIM! INTO THE TRASH WITH HIM!!!" "Gee, up here is along way from down there..."

a "political" manoeuvre with the argument about rules and regulations being used as a cover for the actions. Cameron accused Council President Bruce Gillis of having a fetish for rules and regulations, putting them above the interests of students.

Both the NDY and DSM pledged to hold their ground on the issue which they termed one of freedom of speech. Both said they would continue to set up literature tables in the SUB to sell their pamphlets. Before the weekend was over both groups had prepared pamphlets for distribution on the issue.

In their pamphlet the NDY declared that it was not the first time rules had been manipulated for political purposes and systematically tore into the arguments posed by Gillis and Stevenson.

DSM called on students to support them against the reactionaries of the SUB bureaucracy.

At a student body meeting held Tuesday, students supported the right to distribute literature on campus, confirming the earlier decision of Council.

Legitimacy Questioned

The recent confrontation over the right of student organizations to disseminate political literature in the SUB has brought into question the legitimacy of the regulations of the building as a whole.

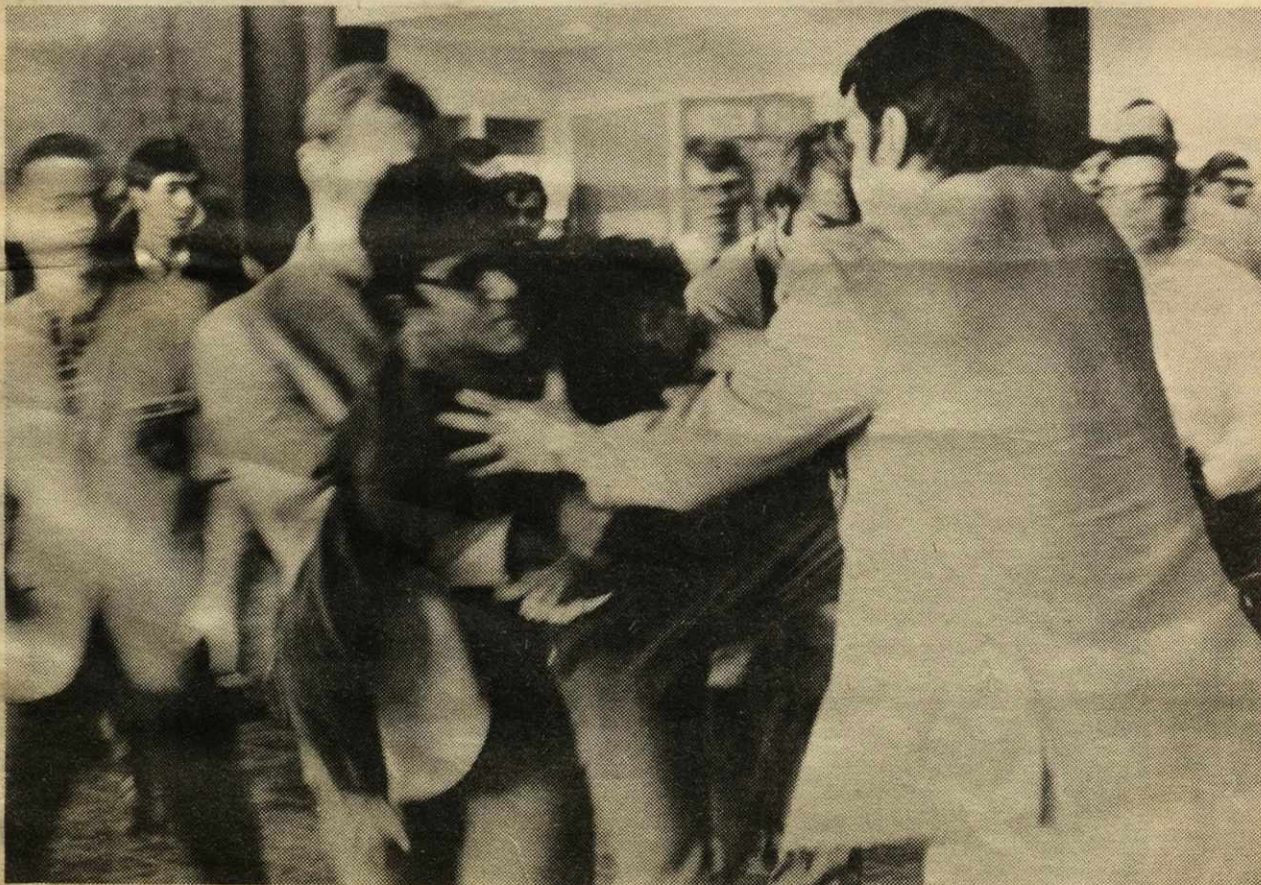
Several Student Council members have indicated they will now press for greater student involvement in deciding the rules for the building.

"It's a question of legitimacy," said Arts Rep Trevor Parsons. "The rules are presently being made by a small group of people. If we had some open meetings to discuss and vote on the rules that now exist, they would acquire at least some degree of legitimacy."

SUB Operations Board, which now is responsible for day to day operations of the building, is comprised of appointed members who have been selected by various means. SUB Affairs Secretary Dave Stevenson was appointed by Council, but was clearly the choice of President Gillis. Eric Button, Stevenson's assistant, was an unsuccessful candidate in last spring's Presidential election. Other members represent various organizations on campus, few, if any, of whom are elected.

The question of legitimate decision making actually began with last year's Presidential election. Kim Cameron, one of the candidates based his campaign on a more democratic type of student government.

The questions about the legitimacy of decisions were not answered by that election. They may be answered now in the debate over the regulations currently under discussion.





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