

"Student Councils Are Dead Ducks"

by DANIEL LaTOUCHE

Student councils are dead ducks, and everybody should be happy about it — especially student councillors themselves.

There is nothing tragic in this process and instead of looking for new ways of keeping the traditional structure alive, student leaders should start thinking of new patterns themselves and the student population.

This is what we have already started to do in Quebec. I don't intend to explain what you should do; the student and social situations of our two societies are too different to allow any projection of solutions.

Student councils have a rather long history in Quebec. In universities and classical colleges, the first task of students, usually with the help of the administration, was to build a representative student council responsible for all student affairs on the campus.

The functions of these student governments were numerous.

1. Organizing student activities.

Even if we never had the number of student activities that you people have, we do have dances, parties, carnivals, debates and championships to arrange, and for this you need a co-ordinating structure.

2. Represent students to the university administration.

Once a year the chancellor would invite student representatives to discuss frankly and openly all the problems of the university community.

At the University of Montreal, the ritual of such meetings was very precise. The sector, or president, until last year always a bishop, would

invite the whole council to his office.

Everybody sat down on the floor in a most paternalistic atmosphere. The rector would then tell them nice little stories about the state of his health and why they had to build a 1.5 million dollar mobile escalator so he would not have to climb 100 steps to reach his office.

There was also the familiar story about the French and Catholic character of the university. Finally, he would tell them how sorry he was in his heart to read all these stories in the student newspaper, *Le Quartier Latin*, about the undemocratic character of the university. Wasn't he himself a true example of democracy?

After the final benediction and an exhortation of university policy, everybody would leave, saying to themselves, "How nice he was for a bishop."

3. School of "democracy". Students in the faculty of law always jump for the chance to practice parliamentary procedures in council.

Quebec premier Daniel Johnson himself was president of the student council at Montreal in the 1940's.

The most up-to-date game on any campus was to think of the best new structure for the student council. Should we have two houses? Weighted votes? Should the executive be composed of four vice-presidents or three vice-presidents?

Very soon student leaders realized how irrelevant they were becoming in a rapidly changing society. It is very nice to deal exclusively with student problems, but of what use is it to the rest of society? For the man who never was at university and whose children will never go there, all your discussions on whether or not the Alma Mater Society should build a SUB change nothing.

He is much more pre-occupied with Premier Bennett's abolition of overtime work in the province. What have you got to say on this? Nothing so far.

Students as a group didn't want to be absent from the building of a new Quebec. They chose to participate in the "revolution tranquille", some violently, some peacefully.

They stepped down from their ivory tower and their football games. They abandoned their red or blue university jackets and decided to go to work to change profoundly the nature and functions of their traditional student structure.

They did not modify the structures themselves, but instead damaged the spirit animating the structures.

Most of all they gave themselves an intellectual tool, an integrated concept by which they could be present in the life of society. They called this ideology: le syndicalisme étudiant... student syndicalism.

Basically, student syndicalism defines the student as a

Staff Attends Workshop



Journalists Richard J. Needham (above) and Charles B. Lynch are shown during an informal gathering during the Atlantic Regional Conference of Canadian University Press. At the Conference UNB stu-

dent Gary Davis was elected President of the regional organization.

young intellectual worker; clearly states there is no such thing as student problems but only student aspects of national, societal problems.

One of the natural consequences of student syndicalism was the withdrawal of French-speaking Quebec from the ranks of the Canadian Union of Students. They had a nation to build, and couldn't afford to lose time planning travel schemes, debating championships or Second Century Weeks.

They had nothing against CUS and Canadian students, just something else to do: organize all Quebec students (and not only French-speaking students) to play an active part in la revolution tranquille.

L'Union Générale des Etudiants du Québec — UGEQ — was born.

We had duplicated the student structure of Canada; but with a different goal in mind.

1. It still keeps its role of a representative body, responsible for student activities.

2. But the main emphasis was put on political pressure. The idea that student council should not take any political stand disappeared (it still seems very alive in Edmonton), and students went on strike to protest government

The regional conference of Canadian University Press was held at Acadia University last week. The two-day workshop-conference was attended by about 45 students from university newspapers in the Atlantic Region.

Speaking at the event were Charles B. Lynch, Chief of Southam News Services, and Richard J. Needham, columnist for the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

Few formal sessions were held at the conference, which was organized on a non-scheduled, non-planned basis.

At the conference, immediate past editor of the *Brunswickan*, Gary Davis, was elected President of the Atlantic Region of Canadian University Press.

ability to higher education, with the abolition of fees.

The Writer, Daniel LaTouche was this year a grad student and part-time political science lecturer at the University of British Columbia. Three years ago, while editor of *Université de Montréal's* student newspaper, *Le Quartier Latin*, LaTouche helped form l'Union Générale des Etudiants du Québec. He served the past two years International Vice-President of UGEQ.

inaction on education. They asked for the nationalization of hydro-electric companies, some of them asked for an independent and free Quebec.

3. They started to compose concrete acts showing their social concern: picketing with strikers, sitting in the Premier's office, boycotting convocation ceremonies.

They formed les Travailleurs Etudiants des Quebec one year before Pearson's idea of a company of young Canadians.

At the same time they were fighting for general accessi-

Dal Quits WUSC

HALIFAX (CUP) — Amid charges that World University Service of Canada is "ingrown" and "financially irresponsible", Dalhousie University students dropped their WUSC ties Mon. night (Oct. 3).

The withdrawal, to be for a one-year trial period, came after a debate in which Dalhousie students' council president John Young said his university has attempted to introduce reform measures at recent national WUSC conferences, but all efforts have been frustrated.

He said the pullout was made necessary by "irrespon-

sible" financial dealings of the national WUSC office in Toronto.

WUSC is ingrown, he charged and spends most of its money on "housekeeping".

Council spent more than two hours debating the motion before backing it 8-3 with 6 abstentions.

Dalhousie WUSC chairman Brendon Yazer opposed the motion, saying it would be a "negative move" to withdraw. He asked council to send a delegate to this week's national assembly in Windsor in "one last attempt" to bring about reform.

Senior Class Party

This year the fall Senior Class Party will have admission restricted to seniors and their dates who are over 21 years of age (or those who can "prove" they are 21). In addition to this restriction, the number of people to be admitted to the party will be limited to about 300. This number includes dates. Last year there were more than 500 seniors. The number of seniors this year is not yet available.

The age requirement is attributed to Provincial Liquor Regulations. The law of the Province says that anyone under 21 who is caught drinking is liable for a conviction. Because of the new licenced status of the ballroom of the Eden Rock Motor Hotel, identification will be required. The law says that if a person is asked for identification, and produces it, liability is removed from the licensee. The requirement of identification by the motel is in its own best interest.

The size of the party is limited because of what the Senior Class Executive calls "changes in Provincial fire regulations."

The party will be held on October 21.

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