



# Union represents poor Uphill fight for "leftist law"

### **By OAKLAND ROSS**

The Canadian legal profession is "traditionally structured to screw certain people", Judith McCormick, a third year law student at Osgoode Hall and a member of the steering committee of the Law Union of Ontario, said this week.

The law association, formed in 1973 by a group of Toronto lawyers in order to meet the legal needs of the poor, of native groups and of labour, also provides a common voice for Ontario's left wing lawyers and law students.

McCormick explained that it can be very lonely to be a socialist in a profession dominated by "small 'c' conservatives". By working together in collectives (investigating such issues as police brutality, landlordtenant relations and immigration policy), Law Union members try to define and understand the unique legal problems of the poor, while overcoming their own feeling of isolation.

A major area of concern for the Law Union is the field of legal education. Byron Pfeiffer, an Osgoode law student and a member of the Union, explained that legal education in Ontario "tends to be retrogressive"; it has, he said, "a 19th century perspective".

Pfeiffer explained that the Canadian Bar Association only represents

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the middle and upper classes and doesn't address itself to "pertinent social issues". Like McCormick, Pfeiffer is neither surprised not upset by this situation. He said that the Law Union was not formed in order to compete with established legal associations, but in order to provide services which those bodies have never been obliged to provide.

Of the approximately 200 members of the Law Union, less than 50 are practicing lawyers. The rest are law students, articling students or legal secretaries.

McCormick admitted that few Toronto lawyers have even heard of the Union, and neither she nor Pfeiffer expects this situation to change in the near future. She explained that very few people enter law school with a desire to work for social change; people become lawyers, she said, because they want the money and the prestige.

There are about 800 law students at Osgoode, only 25 of whom are members of the Law Union. McCormick admitted that the reaction of the rest of the student body is "not too sympathetic"

But the Law Union has been keeping itself busy. Its members are currently working to gain representation on the executive of the Law Society of Upper Canada (the governing body of the profession in Ontario). And last summer, the Union was actively involved in negotiations between the Ojibway Warriors and local authorities during the occupation of Anicinabe Park in Kenora.

Membership in the Union is slowly growing, but Pfeiffer seemed slightly weary when he said that "a leftist lawyer in Ontario is swimming upstream".

## Quick BC evictions end

VANCOUVER (CUP) - All student residences in British Columbia now fall under the provincial Landlord and Tenant Act, according to a recent decision by Barrie Clarke, provincial rentalsman.

Clarke announced his decision is final and can only be changed if challenged and overturned in the

courts.. This is the first time residence occupants will have protection against unjust evictions, and rent hikes above the legal limit of eight per cent.

Students at the University of British Columbia were enthusiastic about the move, since it halts the 24hour eviction process now in operation there.

## **Ungodly report**

OTTAWA (CUP) - Britain may be going to hell in more ways than one. A recent poll indicated that an overwhelming 71 per cent of Britons do not believe in God.

The poll of 1,093 persons was conducted for the British Broadcasting Corporation, and shows the number. of godless has risen nine per cent from the last major survey in 1963.

## Anti-strike acts banned by Code

VICTORIA (CUP) - The British Columbia government has outlawed court injunctions as weapons against strikes and picketing during labour disputes. Labour Minister Bill King described the change as "one of the most fundamental changes in labour law in our history."

In the past, companies have been able to obtain court injunctions to ban or restrict picketing, and with police enforcement were often able to break strikes. The B.C. labour code now allows unions to picket the "ally" of their employer as well, which is defined as "anyone who assists an employer in a lockout or in resisting a lawful strike.'



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