

SFU election Moderates beat Student Power slate

By ALLEN GARR
Canadian University Press

BURNABY—Rob Walsh and his moderate slate polled a convincing victory over student power opponents in Simon Fraser student society elections held last Friday (Sept. 20), a victory which may toll the death bell of student power of SFU.

Walsh, who garnered 1842 votes to activist John Conway's 859, captured the presidency and a chance to put his moderate plans into action.

It is ironic that the student body which received praise from universities across Canada for its effective and democratic student government, spawned by Martin Loney (CUS president-elect) and his summer 1968 council, is now aborting its own creation.

Although Loney and Conway (summer vice-president) consistently received support from the students this summer for their proposed tactics vis a vis democratizing the university, they did anticipate a right wing backlash in the fall.

But forewarning does not always enable forearm-

ing.

The majority of the students voting in the fall election were beyond the communications network emanating from the student power council this summer. As a result, they were left the influences of the often incorrect, sensationalistic commercial press.

Attempts by the rights to overthrow council this summer fell to defeat, often midst peals of laughter. The right, despite evidence to the contrary such as referenda, adamantly insisted the activist council did not represent the views of the students.

This myth became a rallying point for the right this fall.

Walsh, after hearing of his victory said, "I am personally concerned with the accurate representation of student interest. My main priorities at this moment are the search for a permanent president (SFU admin. president P.D. McTaggart-Cowan was dismissed last summer as the result of faculty de-

mands following a CAUT censure) and the revision of the universities act."

Also-ran John Conway appears to be optimistic about the future of student power at SFU, in spite of the election results.

He said, "Since our position in the campaign was a clear and uncompromising one, and the fact that over 800 students voted for us, I am not pessimistic about the results. I don't think anyone voted for us who wasn't prepared to act. On the other hand, the vote for Walsh was one of inaction, apathy, suspicion and fear which suggests to me that support for Walsh is like a morning mist and it will evaporate as rapidly as it crystallized."

Only half of the council has now been voted in at SFU. The remainder will be decided on Friday (Sept. 27). But if history is an indicator, the second slate will follow in the conservative footsteps of the first and SFU will not be as volatile as it was this past summer.

CUS statement: students and violence

Canadian press coverage of the growing Canadian student movement has been unfortunate at best, dangerous at worst. A climate has been created in which a rational debate of student demands and student tactics becomes impossible.

It is a fact that there is in Canada a growing student movement, committed to university change. It is also a fact that this movement still represents a minority, and that its "representativity" will be determined only as students debate and act on issues this year. But it is deliberate, cynical propaganda that this movement represents only a conspiratorial elite, dedicated to chaos and violence.

Yet this is the image conveyed by the press. A press which if it sincerely condemns violence should

condemn those who create an atmosphere conducive to violence in our society.

CUS would like to make its position on student protests and tactics quite clear. It is ironic that the present press labels - "violent," "anarchist," "saboteur" - should be applied to a movement which has its roots deep in the struggle for peace. Both in the U.S. and in Canada, the student movement has grown out of a struggle against the institutionalized violence of our society - against segregation and racism, against the war in Vietnam and against the threat of nuclear war. But the charges of violence against students are as old as the movement itself - they began as soon as protest moved beyond the level of academic debate, as soon as it began to threat-

en established interests and attempted real change. The point is not that protest is ineffective, but rather the opposite - that our present rulers are unresponsive to debate.

Radical tactics are not synonymous with violence. The student movement still depends on pacifist (sit-in) and union (strike) techniques. These techniques do not negate our rational and humanitarian ends, as many would claim, nor do they exclude the possibility of rational debate. Rather they offer us the chance to effect change. It is the beginning of a creative dialogue. An opportunity to meet administrators with our demands, and the power to effect change.

Violence in the student movement has been initiated by the state and the police. Brutal repression of student protest by the police or army has been matched only by the skill with which the mass media has blamed the violence on the students themselves; at Berkeley student protest is now regularly met with clubs, dogs, mace and tear gas - and the students are accused of being "violent"; at Columbia the police were savage not only in beating students,

but also deliberate destruction of university property - and the students are accused of being violent and destructive; in France the students used barricades to defend themselves against truncheons, tear gas and tanks in Chicago this August the same pattern is clear.

This year, in Canada, we may well see theory linked with action, we may see students demanding changes in their university and using their power to see that they occur. But we need see no violence, unless administrators decide to use police against student action and student demands. This is the danger, that the mood now established by a sensationalist media, and of police repression against students. Nothing would please some administrators as much as the chance to crush legitimate student leadership, while support is still growing. Student leaders cannot abandon their commitment to criticism, confrontation and change. They can and should condemn all acts of violence. They can and should be careful that there will be no violence. The existence of violence will be decided by administrators and not students.

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