

CUS



CUS

Students

of

Union

Canadian

CUS



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# Tell us: What is CUS?

Editor,  
Dalhousie Gazette,  
Halifax

Dear Sir;

Having read your first two issues of "The Dalhousie Gazette", in particular the articles on CUS and the recent developments within the organization, I would request that you would editorially explain the intended function of CUS, and the guidelines within which it was established. I would request this because I had not realized that its function was to pass judgement on political issues, particularly international issues such as the war in Viet Nam. Nor did I realize that it had the authority to issue statements on behalf of all Canadian students with which the majority of the students would disagree - namely, the independence of Quebec. I feel that we must remember that this is the Canadian Union of Students. Surely there are more natural bounds within which such an organization can work. To make statements of such magnitude as were recently made is not fair to the Canadian student body. I feel that until there is a clear, decisive majority of the student body that has indicated its feeling on such matters, there is no organization in the position to make a statement on behalf of the whole student body. It would appear that CUS has become spokesman for only a small

and often outspoken segment of the body which it represents.

Concerning its statement on Viet Nam, it is very likely that the statement issued reflected the opinion of the majority of students. However, if the organization is going to play politics, I feel that it cannot be so selective of the issues with which it concerns itself. Why only Viet Nam? Surely, if the organization considers itself in the position to cast political opinion, it will not fall victim of casting opinion on the more (for lack of a better term) "in issues". Why were there not statements passed on the Czechoslovakian situation, the Arab-Israeli crisis, the Nigeria-Biafra struggle, the Canada-France tensions, the U.S. dominance of Canada question, Chinese and Russian involvement in Viet Nam, Britain's economic problems, poor crops on the prairies, the postal-worker's strike, the insect problem in the south of Madagascar. What I am suggesting is that CUS keep hands-off political issues unless the particular issue has a definite and immediate effect on the student body, moreso than most issues.

Surely there are enough issues concerning the universities and the students that they can keep busy without having to dabble in politics.

Sincerely yours,  
(unsigned)

## Representivity: In and out of CUS

By JUDY PEACOCKE

Every student who registers at Dalhousie automatically (with the payment of his tuition fee) becomes a member of the Student Union, in so far as students have interests to be represented in terms of their membership in the whole university community, there is a Student Council elected by the students to legislate and take action in the demonstrated interests of the students.

In recognizing that students have diverse political affiliations in terms of their membership in the community at large, Student Council provides for the organization and activity of various political groups. However, Council does not assume the responsibility of either debating or voting on given political issues. This same distinction holds in the religious sphere as well.

At the annual gathering of Canadian university student representatives i.e. the CUS Congress, we find again the same type of representation - as it is our elected student leaders that hold the power of vote. However, membership in SUS is voluntary by institution, and there is always the possibility of withdrawal upon disagreement with the general trend of policy. But weighed against the actual and potential bargaining strength of belonging in a national union, withdrawal over a single issue or single type of issues (e.g. weighing of resolutions on political issues by the press).

There is also the distinction between political issues per se, and those political actions which arouse not a political consciousness but rather, outrage our social consciousness. We can avoid pronouncing on actions and situations that arise from our varying political philosophies, but there is no denying our membership in the world community of men and our responsibility against threats to its well-being.

If our representatives at the Congress did not feel responsible enough to our personal creeds to keep silent on solely political issues i.e. not abstaining, that is a question of their integrity and not the direction of CUS.

As recorded earlier in the Gazette, Dalhousie did vote -- negatively -- on the Quebec-Canada issue, essentially a political issue. Regarding their denouncing of "US imperialism in Viet Nam" (a poorly constructed resolution in logical terms especially), Dalhousie's Council must face the implication of taking a political stand in the name of Dal students during the International Week of Protest against the Viet Nam war. This is more of the situation that outrages our SOCIAL consciousness.

However, the resolution did entail distinctly political stands as well. Perhaps the Dal delegation thought it would soon no longer be a member of CUS and would therefore avoid a campus confrontation on the political stands it did take. Political methods for the benefit of others must certainly be distinguished from political stands in the name of others.

## CUS: In and out of representivity

By JUDY PEACOCKE

The word is out that Dalhousie membership in the Canadian Union of Students is soon to be The Burning Issue for the campus and Council.

Since the motives for this momentous soul-searching have yet to be unveiled and presented to us by A. Randall Smith or his collaborators we can only assume a few prevailing attitudes and proffer some factors to be considered.

Most obvious of these is the "grimme attitude". This attitude is best displayed when students and student leaders ask "What are we getting out of it?" The assumption, uninformed and immature as it must be, is based on the untruth that CUS exists only as a service organization and will render such and such services to students collectively and individually by virtue of their institution's membership in the Union.

### POWER BASE NEEDED

By employing students as associate secretaries (at a living wage and that is all it is) and giving them the power base of the majority of Canadian students through membership by institution, the Canadian Union of Students is in a strong lobbying position at Parliament and its offices in Ottawa. In the interests of both the education of university students and their demands for a new, more responsible role in determining and conducting their learning process, CUS has been able to make strong representations to the Federal Government. Its requests have been met in the form of study com-

missions (producing valuable evidence to demonstrate further their point) and such concrete returns as the Canada Student Loans Plan.

### STRONG LOBBY

Yet it is not so much that CUS can yield returns, but that it has the required support to maintain a strong lobby in the name of Canadian students that is important. This demands an understanding and a level of sophistication that a number of member unions appear to lack.

Consequent to the above consideration is the maintenance of CUS field workers for member institutions and their regions. Such workers' experiences elsewhere can contribute greatly to settling matters of local student concern. That is, matters that required action which has been evaluated according to its effectiveness and on this basis, may or may not again be put in use.

The more pertinent question in this issue of membership does not appear to be in what context the Union will operate, but rather what areas of action are chosen, whether they are directed to a particular end (if so, what end or purpose) and finally, is support for that end forthcoming from the member institution concerned.

It would seem more profitable and much more to the point to have a referendum not on the membership question itself, but rather on The Burning Issue within CUS that our student government leaders find particularly intolerable. "Ah, there's the rub."