

# Re-organize for reform

(CUP)—In English Canada student leaders are discovering this second dimension of student council. They are getting used to playing an active role in the social life of their community.

Since I've arrived here at UBC I never saw so many people criticizing a university administration on so many points, and I thought back in Quebec we held the record for this sort of activity.

But what do you do afterwards? I agree the board of governors is the most ridiculous structure ever invented to run a university, and since Canada now has a universal pension plan, there is no more use for it.

But how do you replace it?

By putting a student on the board? Everyone knows it doesn't change a single iota in the power structure of the university.

By putting a majority of students and faculty on the board?

Students and professors in place of actual governors will tend to act the same way actual governors are acting now.

Look at how student administrations are run. My experience is that throughout Canada, Quebec, and even other parts of the world, student structures are the most

## background

The writer is Daniel LaTouche, a grad student in political science. Three years ago, while editor of *Université de Montreal's* student newspaper, *Le Quartier Latin*, LaTouche helped form *L'Union Generale des Etudiants du Quebec*. He served the past two years as international vice-president of UGEQ.

Last week, Daniel LaTouche outlined the move of Quebec university student councils towards action on the provincial and national fronts.

The students of Quebec based their action on student syndicalism, he said then.

"Basically student syndicalism defines the student as a young intellectual worker; clearly, states there is no such thing as student problems, but only student aspects of national, societal problems."

This week, LaTouche turns to English-Canadian universities, and suggests action their students could take toward "social animation".

reactionary, well-established, and pro-status-quo structures I can think of.

Try and change something in the student structure and it's like Mr. Smith fighting City Hall.

Groups like SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), or SUPA, are a reaction to this.

They doubt, with good reason, the effectiveness of actual student structures, so they've abolished them, and haven't replaced them.

The result is anarchy.

And I question the changes—the actual and concrete changes—they can make in society.

The atmosphere is very homey in these organizations, especially if you have had enough of official structures.

It's very nice to have a meeting in a small room where everybody sits on the floor and listens to Bob Dylan. But these groups are now,

and always will be, a small minority.

If the university is to be a community of students and professors, inevitably you will need some form of structures which will enable the majority, not just the elite, to run the university effectively.

This is the problem of the university community.

If students are to have any responsibility in the university (and not only token responsibilities like taking 10 months to decide whether or not they should have a student union building), then they must accept the obligations and the problems.

I suppose it's because Quebec appears to be a different type of province (didn't we elect Daniel Johnson—a friend of former premier Duplessis) that we had to try something different.

And the situation was different.

We could not afford two types of student organizations—the traditional one and a more revolutionary one.

We had to manage both roles at the same time, and work together efficiently with SUPA, and even potential FLQ anarchists.

We could not afford to spread our forces in opposite directions.

Our solution was to go to the students and organize, within our actual traditional structures, a centralization movement.

We continued with students councils, but parallel to them we created a new and different type of structure, continuously challenging the first one.

To achieve this goal on every campus, student leaders are training ordinary students to be socially animated.

They are not professional anarchists or activists—their main task

is to keep in close contact with the students.

They meet with students and have them discuss their own problems. They represent themselves and so they don't try to convince students to do this and that.

If students feel council is useless and should be abolished, their job is not to convince students the president is a nice guy.

It's up to the students to decide what they want.

The main student structure in Quebec—UGEQ—was the first to get involved in this. More than 200 students have been trained, but difficulties are appearing.

In large sectors, there is no concern at all for student syndicalism.

But a communication channel has been opened, not only to consult the student on his needs, but to have him participate in decision-making.

Of course, this is not the perfect solution.

Strong resistance has appeared from traditional leaders who feel that all this question of participation is nonsense—that we should let them manage since they're the ones who are interested.

But interest can have many faces.

It's not because you don't want to lose one evening a week at council meetings that you are not interested—you are simply not interested in this form of participation.

We think this is the only way to build a real university community where students not only vote twice a year but where they form an integral part of university life.

It's only if you can admire this integration that you can hope to solve definitely the problems of relations between students and the world surrounding them.

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