

JAN/81

## VOTE "LOBBY"

### WHY SHOULD YOU VOTE TO "LOBBY CLC AFFILIATES"?

In the last AUCE affiliation referendum, more people voted to affiliate to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) than for any other option. In the third ballot we will decide on the means by which we will seek membership in the CLC. The two options are, first to lobby other CLC unions to reverse the CLC's initial rejection of our application for direct affiliation, which would keep AUCE constitutionally and structurally intact; second to disband AUCE and 'merge' with a pre-existing CLC affiliate - either BCGEU, OTEU or CUPE.

If the AUCE membership decides, in the coming referendum to lobby CLC affiliates to have the CLC executive's decision to reject our application reversed, then there will be two possible outcomes. If our lobbying efforts succeed, AUCE will become a CLC affiliate. This will give us access to CLC and BCFED services, but otherwise will have a minimal effect on our local. We will continue to be autonomous, our local and provincial constitutions will be intact and only a minute portion of our local dues will go to the CLC and BCFED. Of course the process of lobbying could take a long time. If our treatment by the CLC leadership during that time, or any other unexpected circumstance, should cause us to change our minds, we can, as a union, reconsider our decision not to join the CCU (joining the CCU was the option chosen by TSSU in the last ballot); or we could decide to remain an independent union, as we are now.

In short, the 'lobby option will *not* result in encroachments on our autonomy and on the flexibility we need in order to function as a union of teaching support staff.



## TSSU AND THE ADVANTAGES OF AUCE

If, however, we were to 'merge' with another CLC affiliate we would cease to be AUCE, and to enjoy the benefits of this union. When TAs started AUCE Local 6 (TSSU) in 1976 they considered various alternatives - being independent; joining the fledgling Graduate Assistants Association in Ontario; or joining one of the big unions representing thousands of different workers. They chose AUCE because it has unique features which suit our needs.

As we are all in universities and colleges, we share common experiences and problems in dealing with our employers; AUCE is organised and run by members; it employs no bureaucrats - but only members elected for limited terms of office. The principle behind this is that the best way to get good contracts and grievance settlements, is to have local members fighting for what *they* want. Under AUCE's constitution, our local has complete autonomy. We retain control of all local affairs - finances, grievances, negotiations, etc. We are also free to leave AUCE at any time without reprisals. Because our local consists of transitory, part-time teachers, our needs are different from those of many other workers, and AUCE's structure guarantees that we will never be overwhelmed by the rest of the union. The active members of TSSU have never regretted joining AUCE. During our organising period, and while negotiating our first contract, we received donations of \$6 000; plus \$10 000 long-term interest free loans from the Provincial. We were also assisted with legal fees, in research, and in training. In the future we can be assured that the Provincial Executive will work with the local to provide the services and educational materials *we need*.

## PROBLEMS IN OTHER UNIONS

When TAs at UBC decided to organise a union, after discussions with TSSU, with AUCE and with CUPE, they decided that to organise a campus as large and diverse as theirs, they needed the greater 'resources' of CUPE. However, they have found that the vast resources of CUPE are not easy to tap. Despite

promises before they joined CUPE, it was only after months of nagging and fighting that they received money to hire two organisers for one semester. Their negotiating team consists of a CUPE business agent, plus local members. A business agent is not a member of the local, and consequently it's hard for him to understand their working conditions, needs and desires. He is assigned to several locals in his area, by the CUPE executive. There is a consequent high potential for the business agent to compromise the local's position in negotiations, either through lack of understanding, or because he is following general CUPE policy.

After four years of hard work, TSSU is at last viable, functioning local, and we should keep it that way. If we were to lose AUCE, and be merged into another union this would be more difficult.

We would:

- \*\*\* *Pay much higher per capita tax, leaving little or no money with which to operate the local, unless we increased dues;*
- \*\*\* *risk losing control of our affairs. Given that we are a local of transitory, part-time workers, we would have little chance of influencing a large union controlled by professional, full-time union bureaucrats;*
- \*\*\* *not be free to conduct negotiations, without the input of a business agent;*
- \*\*\* *lose all our funds and property if we later chose to secede from that union;*
- \*\*\* *apply for services to a large machine, geared to workers with very different needs from ours;*
- \*\*\* *suffer stiff penalties if our local disagreed with orders or policies of the Executive.*

This is an issue of great importance to TSSU. Everyone should be sure they return their ballots in time (Jan. 9th). And we would urge everyone to vote to lobby CLC affiliates. ITS THE ONLY WAY TO PRESERVE OUR UNION AS IT IS.

Jack Gegenberg	Peter Lane	Alan Mabin
Mary Mabin	Michele Pujol	Bob Wiseman
John Malcolmson	Patrick Black	Erling Christensen
Anne Berger	Val Whiffen	



## AFFILIATION DEBATE HISTORY

In 1979, the annual AUCE Convention passed a resolution directing the Provincial Executive to seek affiliation with the CLC, and if rejected, to call a special convention to discuss alternate possibilities. We applied, and were rejected by the CLC executive, without consulting CLC convention or member unions. Heated debate took place over the next six months, as a special research committee met, held meetings with representatives of various unions and labour organisations. Finally the Special Convention, held in April 1980, passed a proposal to submit the issue to the membership by referendum ballot, in 4 stages. The balloting could stop at any stage, depending on the result. The first ballot asked "Do you want to affiliate with any labour organisation" - and the answer was Yes; the second ballot asked "Do you want to affiliate to the CLC, CCU, or any other labour organisation", and CLC passed by a plurality of votes. Now the question before us is "Do you want to join the CLC by lobbying CLC affiliates to have our rejection overturned, or do you want to disband AUCE, and join the CLC by merging into another CLC union?"

