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DAVID THOMPSON UNIVERSITY CENTRE HISTORY by Sigrid Shepard

February of 1974 saw the executive of the staff association of NDU start to union hunt after a frustrating attempt to settle a grievance involving summary dismissal plus other examples of our powerless situation as a staff association. We wanted a non-traditional union run on democratic grounds with local control of demands and negotiations and luckily for us AUCE was making a strong drive to organize UBC and SFU at that time and said they would be interested in taking our small local under their provincial wing. We jumped at the chance to join because AUCE exemplified all the aspects of unionism we wanted without control from outside or set thinking about what unions should negotiate for and how they should act. After the oppression we had worked under we knew what we wanted and thought we would be able to get it for ourselves. We signed up most of the workers (over 90 percent) in a three week drive and then applied for certification which came in a record three weeks due to the ineptitude of the then administration which wrote a letter to the LRB saying as far as they were concerned we had no right to exist and therefore couldn't and they refused to recognize us. Needless to say the LRB had a few laughs out of that one and then quickly certified us having no suspicions we were a company union.

After certification the work began--our struggle for a first contract was long and wordy, the President of the University insisted that he negotiate with us and being a union-hating, anti-feminist who went in for stream-of-consciousness rambles it made negotiating rather difficult until we had a strike vote (98 percent in favor) and a mediator was called in. Finally we settled in late November of the first year with a large across-the-board raise and many added benefits. The next year was a replay of the first year with the same set of negotiators and a refusal to honor many of the terms of the agreement unless forced to do so. We did get another good contract with a classification committee set up to reclassify all jobs (the committee was and is made up of both union and administration personnel). Traditionally female occupied jobs with low salaries were reclassified up the scale as a result of this committee's deliberations. We also instigated a Labor/Management Committee to discuss our problems before they blew up into major grievances and this committee has continued to function smoothly up to now. That year saw a successful use of a 98-1 over refused holidays and a successful arbitration over vacations. We had a clause in the contract which awarded an extra 5 days to employees after 5 years of service which the administration said was to be awarded five years from the signing of that contract--needless to say that was not our understanding, nor the arbitrator's, so we now have that clause firmly established in our contract along with 3 extra days vacation between Christmas and New Years which the 98-1 won us.

With all these usual union activities going on we also were continually in the

throes of trying to save the university from ceasing to exist as the lower mainland educators did not like the idea of a university in the interior, especially NDU. The NDP were elected and promised to form a university with public funds at NDU but continually dragged their feet with commissions, ~~xxx~~ reports, studies etc. until they lost the election in December 1975. Since then our existence has become precarious in the extreme^{me} and the university for all intents and purposes has ceased to exist ~~xxxx~~ despite political promises to the contrary.

The first step in the dismantling was to dismiss the first and second year faculty for the year 1976-77 and only have third and fourth year ~~xxxxxxx~~ courses at the NDU facility ~~x~~. Due to successor rights, some of the ex-faculty members were hired by Selkirk College to teach first and second year courses at the NDU campus under Selkirk's auspices (if this sounds like a circus it is!). The next year saw the dismissal of the third and fourth year faculty amidst much fighting by their union and the Department of Education. McGeer and Hardwick came in for particular fire by the faculty union due to their somewhat damning statements ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ concerning the quality of education given at the former university. This matter has now gone to the courts as a matter of libel and is said to be one of the problems we at DTUC, the inheritor of NDU, ~~has~~^e with the department of Education. What the staff managed to salvage out of all this was a good severance package for people being let off and a settlement in lieu of pension for persons with 3 years or more seniority regardless of whether they were laid off or not. We also had the promise of continuing existence of our union for the jobs that remained at the new entity DTUC. ~~xxxxxxx~~

As a last minute search to find someone to administer the entity David Thompson University Centre (DTUC), the government talked Selkirk College into managing DTUC for an interim year while they decided what to do with it. As soon as Selkirk entered the picture CUPE tried to take over and decertify our union. We countered this move by saying that Selkirk was only managing for one year on a temporary basis so we were the proper bargaining union for DTUC employees--last year the LRB saw it our way but this year Selkirk has been declared our management again for an indefinite period of time. The government is stalling again about what to do with its white elephant on the hill and no one else seems to want to take DTUC under its wing.

The situation as it stands right now is CUPE is applying for successor status and we are doing everything in our power to remain the bargaining union for the employees at DTUC with a 100 percent backing by the members of our union. We do not want control from outside with negotiations set up by outside persons; we do not want to lose the superior benefits of our contract in vacations, holidays, classifications, fringe benefits, wages, etc. which being forced into ~~xxxx~~ CUPE would result in ; and most of all we want local control. Since Selkirk is our management and we are still considered a separate institution we are applying to the LRB to remain the proper

bargaining agent for the employees of DTUC. If this is denied, we are asking that the staff employees on both campuses be allowed to use their democratic right to vote on whether CUPE or AUCE will be the successor union for Selkirk and DTUC.