

FROM LOCAL 6 - VOTE "LOBBY" TO KEEP AUCE TOGETHER

Dec. 13/80

WHY SHOULD YOU VOTE TO "LOBBY CLC AFFILIATES"?

In the last AUCE affiliation referendum, more people voted to affiliate to the 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 & 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 BC Federation of Labour. 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 to affiliate to the CLC. At that time we could re-evaluate our decision not to join the CCU (the option endorsed by Locals 5 & 6 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.

THE ADVANTAGES OF AUCE

If we were to 'merge' with another CLC affiliate, we would cease to enjoy many of the benefits of AUCE. When local 6 was first formed, in 1976, we chose AUCE because it has unique features, which specifically suited the needs of our local. Under AUCE's constitution, each local has complete autonomy. The Provincial executive cannot place any local under trusteeship, or prevent any local from leaving the union, if a democratic vote to join another union has taken place. Any local leaving AUCE would retain all its money and property. AUCE is organised and run by members - it employs no bureaucrats, but only members elected for limited terms of office.

This is the best way to get good contracts and grievance settlements, since local members can best fight for what they want. The active members of Local 6 (TSSU) have never regretted the decision to join AUCE. During our organising period we received \$6 000 in donations from the Provincial, and a further \$10 000 long-term, interest-free loan; we were assisted with legal fees, in research and training. In the future we know 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 Provincial, 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 2 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. He is assigned to the local by the CUPE executive and has to 'service' other locals as well. Consequently it is hard for him to understand the specific working conditions, needs and desires of the local, in bargaining. 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 negotiating policy.

After 4 years of hard work, Local 6 is a viable, functioning local at last, and we want to keep it that way. We believe that if we were merged into BCGEU, OTEU or CUPE, this would be much more difficult. Our operating freedom would be restricted in many ways.

- We would pay much higher per capita tax, leaving less (or nothing) to operate the local on, or requiring a dues increase;
- Risk losing control. As a small group of mainly clerical workers, we would have little influence within a large union controlled by professional, full-time union bureaucrats;
- We would not be free to conduct negotiations, without the input, or dictums of a business agent;
- We would lose all our funds and property if we later chose to secede
- We would have to apply for services to a large machine, geared towards workers with different needs and experiences from our own, rather than working out, with our union, the type of services we want;
- We would suffer stiff penalties if our local disagreed with the orders and policies of the executive of the union we merged with.

This is an issue of great importance to AUCE. Every member of the union should have a voice in the decision. We would urge everyone to vote to Lobby CLC affiliates. ITS THE ONLY WAY TO PRESERVE OUR UNION AS IT IS.

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