

Beyond the elections:

WHAT WILL BECOME OF OUR COLLECTIVE TOOLS?

The executive's opening remarks to the Federal Council of Nov. 14, 15, & 16 dealt with what is at stake in this election. The text is too long to be reproduced here but we would like to present you with some extracts:

"...it is important to point out the urgency of the present political context for the union movement and for the population of Quebec...For the past year the Parti Quebecois has consolidated its swing towards the ruling class. However, all of the recent transformations within the P.Q. only underline the fundamental realignment that has been going on in the party since it took power in 1976. Our written assessments of the P.Q. show this very clearly. (See the documents "Bilan du P.Q. en matière d'éducation" and "Le 'discours' sur les femmes".) The law on health and safety at work and the law on injured workers, which lead us at the moment to question our participation in sectorial associations, clearly show us how the government finds ways to withdraw a lot of negotiating items from the collective agreements.

"...As for the Liberals, they haven't changed much. This week they unveiled their programme on education and, in some ways, certain of its orientations seemed close to our concerns. However, it is significant that when it came to making promises concerning higher education, the only pledges were to put some money into maintaining equipment tied to the new emphasis on technology along with a new way of financing universities. Compared to the needs in education, this isn't much.

"...Thus, behind the policies of the P.Q., behind the history and the programme of the Liberals, behind the speeches proclaiming the end of ideologies, a plan of society emerges: individualism, excellence, free enterprise, shared responsibility. These are the strategies of business and of governments to discourage the collective responses of the population. And we are slow to respond. How can we explain the general demobilization? We think that our lack of a collective social plan to put forward can explain a good part of it. Furthermore, and probably what is the most important, we are witnessing the dismantling of our union structures, the dismantling of the collective tools of workers, by the strategies and policies of our adversaries.

"...It is within our union structures that we can debate and find responses to the attacks of employers and of governments. It is within the union movement that we can find the means, the resources, and the instruments with which to fight the neo-conservative plans of Mulroney, Reagan, Johnson and Bourassa. Our adversaries have clearly understood this. Their offensive against the union movement and the fundamental right of workers to freely negotiate is proof of this. ...we have to go beyond the demobilization and the feelings of powerlessness that we've had since the decree. We have to revive our desire to act, our desire to fight.

Increasing Instability in Teaching Jobs

The Council also heard an interim report delivered by the committee on the instability of teaching jobs.

Two tasks claimed most of the attention of this committee. The first was to develop a questionnaire which will allow the committee to gather information on the concrete situation of the 'status precaires' (teachers who don't have secure jobs). Secondly the committee worked on broadening their analysis of the growing instability of teaching jobs.

The final report will be deposited at the March Council. The committee has also taken the responsibility of better informing non-tenured teachers in the federation of its work. There will be a session to do in mid-February. We would like to take this opportunity to ask unions who have not yet returned the questionnaires to complete them. It is important that the information, on which we will base the recommendations in our final report, be as accurate as possible.

THE MEANS TO CONTINUE

The majority of the members of the Federal Council (two-thirds) voted in favour of a 'permanent' solution for financing negotiations in order to have the means to con-

tinue.

So, from January 1986, the regular dues of the federation will go from .45% to .50%. We will no longer deposit 10% of the regular dues into the negotiating reserve. Instead this rule will be replaced by a rule which divides up the dues in the following manner: .41% will go into the general fund and .09 will go to the negotiating fund. Any eventual surplus in the general fund will also go into the negotiating fund. This change is designed to put an end to the 'regular special dues' levied at the most intense periods of negotiating. Thus, the present special dues of .08% ends in January.

FNEEQ can now maintain the present services, without any growth provided in the short term, but without any cuts either.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: A DIFFICULT DECISION

The mechanisms of the law on health and safety (Bill 17) are being set up in the education sector. As a result a sectorial association of employer and union organizations has been set up. This association is to run on a parity basis and has a mandate which includes information, training, research and technical assistance.

There are presently 11 of these sectorial associations in existence and we have had reports from other CSN federations on why they have or have not participated in them. Each of these associations is very well funded and can penetrate right into the workplace to contact workers directly. Since our union partners are participating (CEQ, FTQ, FAPUQ), the Federal Council decided to recommend that the General Assemblies vote in favour of FNEEQ getting involved in the negotiations about the rules of functioning and representation of the future sectorial association in the education sector. This process may take up to two years. At the same time, it is extremely important to set up our union health and safety committees in order to develop union strategies, on our own terms, and to enlarge our rights in health and safety matters.

FROM SOUTH AFRICA: WILLIS McHUNU EXPLAINS

The committee on international solidarity invited Willis McHunu, a South African steelworker and member of the Federation of South African Trade Unions, to speak to the Council. He is in Quebec to speak of the living conditions of the black population, who are pushed onto only 13% of the land and who don't have the right to freely circulate in the white cities, and also to ask for our help.

The major ways that we can help are to demand that the Canadian and Quebec governments do something, to demand that institutions that we have anything to do with divest of their holdings in South Africa and to boycott the following products: Granny Smith apples, Outspan oranges, Rothman cigarettes, and O'Keefe beer.

We would like to remind you that FNEEQ is participating in the CIDMAA campaign "To Be Young In South Africa". A dossier to enable you to give a course on South Africa is available at FNEEQ (598-2241).

LAST MINUTE UPDATE!

The University of Montreal is pushing its disgusting anti-unionism to the end. After being turned down by the Appeal Court, which gave accreditation to the Union of Hourly Paid Workers, after seven years of struggle and judicial procedures, the University of Montreal is appealing to the Supreme Court!!!

Who said that access to unionization was a given in Quebec?