

STATEMENTS FROM THE CANDIDATES FOR THE 1981  
AUCE LOCAL ONE ELECTIONS

NOMINEES FOR VICE-PRESIDENT

Nancy Wiggs has declined the nomination for Vice-President in writing.

From Kittie Cheema (Recon Unit, Catalogue Records, Library Processing Centre)

As a candidate in the election for Vice-President of AUCE Local 1, I would like to speak to two important issues facing the AUCE membership. The key question involved in both issues is what future do we, the membership, want for our union. AUCE was founded in 1974. At that time and for a few years after that, AUCE had a solid reputation as a fighting trade union. Since that time, this union has gone downhill. Some say the reason for this is an apathetic and uncaring membership. I disagree with this view. In my opinion, the reason for this downhill slide has been a split and unorganized union leadership. A leadership which has become impotent -- unable or unwilling to lead. In the face of this crisis and the economic crisis facing the workers many "solutions" have been offered to the AUCE membership based on the pet theories of a few individuals. Two are in the forefront today:

1. Merger with CUPE
2. Secession from the Provincial Association

In my opinion neither one of these "solutions" will solve any of the problems facing us right now or in the future. All of our problems, whether they be the lack of a strike fund, negotiating power, higher wages, improved working conditions, can only be solved by a united fighting membership with a united fighting leadership. The nurses who went on strike two years ago were testimony to this fact. They had no strike fund to speak of; they were not members of a big shot trade union, but a small independent union like ours; and they were not affiliated to anyone. They fought with determination and refused to back down resulting in a wage increase of approximately 40%, an increase they were certainly entitled to.

We are going to be facing this situation next year when our contract comes up for renewal. What is our leadership proposing we should do? Secede from the Provincial Association. Why? Because they have not done anything for us. I agree the Provincial Association has not done anything in defence of the interests of the workers. However, I am opposed to secession on the basis that this is going to lead to disintegration of our union at a time when it is crucial we have a strong unity in our fight to defend our wages and working conditions which we have won to date and extend our rights and increase our wages. What will happen if we secede? The campaign to join another union will begin. First we will have split from the Provincial, then our local itself will be split on the basis of whether to remain as an independent local or to join CUPE, BCGEU, OTEU or whatever. Where will this end? Our local will be splintered into many small different unions on the basis of whose pet theory has influence in what area. This only serves the interests of the employer and will seriously weaken us.

Instead of this, we should be fighting with the Provincial Association on the issues which we disagree and demand they represent our interests and not those of some clique. We should maintain our unity on the basis of principle and we should prepare now for a militant, well-organized fight to defend the rights we have won in our contract and to expand them. We should also get together with all those sections on campus who are affected by the cutbacks in education and stand shoulder to shoulder with them to fight these cutbacks. I do not agree with the stand of the university to blame the increase in wages of the workers and faculty for the increase in tuition fees and cutbacks in other areas. It is the policies of the Provincial and Federal governments which have led to these cutbacks, and they cut across our society.

This is what I stand for and am prepared to fight for should I be elected to represent you and work for you as Vice-President of AUCE Local #1.

*Kittie Cheema*