

Excilibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

The right question

The organizers of last weekend's French Canadian conference promised "to avoid the old question: what does Quebec want."

They succeeded. And, as a result, Vanier college can now add its own contribution to the list of campus catastrophes.

About \$3,000 was spent on the conference by Vanier and if more than 30 students from the whole campus - let alone Vanier college - attended the affair, they did an excellent job of making themselves inconspicuous.

Even the chief organizer for the conference, Kim Veltman, admitted that from a participation standpoint, the conference did not succeed.

However, he said he was pleased with "the quality of the discussion" that did take place.

"I would strongly urge Vanier to do this thing again if we could get more people to come," Veltman said.

Although 300 people were expected no more than 125 were seen at any one time.

Vandoo editor Mel Lubek, who attended the conference, said he was "bored stiff by all the speakers I heard."

Besides resembling social science lectures, the speeches were completely slanted towards a federalist point of view and consequently any discussion about the independence movement in Quebec was left to the seminars.

Some of the Quebec students supported independence for the province, but the structure of the conference made it impossible to get into a real discussion of the topic.

No mention was made of why thousands are marching in the streets, of why French-speaking Quebecois are being paid less than English-speaking Quebecers for equal work, of why Quebec's economy remains controlled by a small English-speaking elite.

Veltman said he was not interested in discussing these issues because "we can't change the world anyway, as students."

He also felt a conference aimed at discussing these problems would cause a breakdown in communication between English and French-speaking participants.

It is precisely this avoidance of basic issues that leads to mystification of the real problems in Quebec.

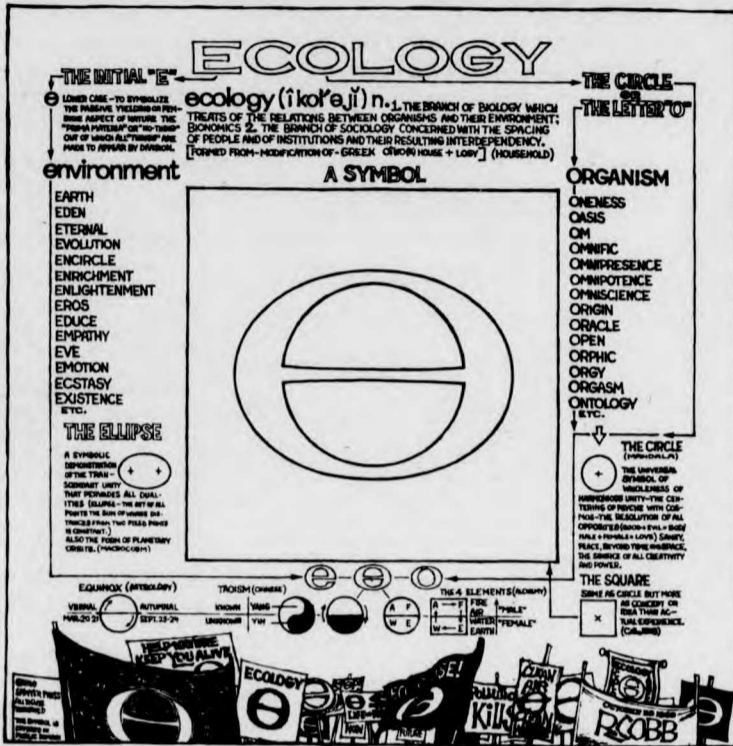
Many English Canadians tend to look at the problem as purely linguistic or cultural, thereby concluding that if we all get together and become bilingual, the problem will be solved.

This viewpoint simply does not coincide with reality.

The Bilingual Bicultural commission itself admits that even in Quebec, English is the language of success and the knowledge of French is more of a hindrance than an aid.

Assimilated French Canadians, the Bi-Bi report says, "who speak only English earn considerably more than bilingual French Canadians."

Such questions were not dealt with last weekend. And until they are, we can never hope to have a real understanding of the struggle now going on in that province.



The old York and New

In Toronto, on any given morning, one wanders to the window, looks out into the yard, and then, just in case there was a nuclear war somewhere, and school is cancelled, one turns on the radio and waits for the news.

In New York there are two stations that broadcast nothing but news 24 hours a day. Bearing this in mind, you wake up much differently. Staggering

to the window, you don't look outside so much as down below. Seeing the street, you move quickly to turn on the radio, to see if by chance the holocaust hasn't arrived. The morning street would certainly imply that it had been and left already.

Back home in Toronto, we used to go outside in the evenings for a breath of fresh air. Here, the very concept is ludicrous. For fresh air, you go inside; for atmosphere you go out. For quiet you fly to Toronto, wondering all the while why you had ever left.

The real question is: how often are you willing to tolerate all the shit here in order to reach the excellent things? Then you invariably wonder why someone couldn't take all the excellent things, put them in an unspoiled place, and we could all move there.

There is a one mile area in New York where the three national networks have their headquarters, as well as Time and Newsweek and TheNew York Times.

But when one talks about an undue concentration of power, everybody here is quick to mention Washington.

When you open a checking account you are surprised to discover that not only do they not give you any interest, but they charge you 10 cents a check in addition to a monthly charge.

But if you're smart, you never enter a bank, as you can do it all by mail. New York has about as many banks as Toronto, with four times as many people waiting to use them.

You are strangely immobile here. You can never, for instance, go to New York for a weekend. In fact, when you think about it, you can't go anywhere for a weekend, or any other time, because you are always right here, at the center, in the middle of it all.

And on your block is the butcher, the baker and the candle-stick maker, so you needn't leave the block. You sort of get the feeling of having arrived somewhere, without trying, perhaps without wanting.

Mister, how do you get to Carnegie Hall?

Practice, son, practice.

Ma'am, how do you get to Carnegie Hall?

Sorry lad, you can't get there from here.

Bill Novak

Excuse me, aspiring scientists

Excuse me, aspiring young scientist, you too can sin ... or ... all good reactions are inhibited by the enzyme: WEDON'TGIVEASHITAE.

If it's not really true that the scientists and science students act like they live in "an ivory tower" over in Farquharson or Petrie, the students of third year science are certainly trying hard to prove it!

On Friday, during the second day of the international moratorium on Vietnam, the biochemistry class of third year science voted resoundingly against having even a discussion on the moratorium. Of a class of 45 students at least 15 even stayed away for fear of a vote to have a discussion on the war (they had a test a few periods afterwards - grub for that extra mark boys). And of the rest of those stalwarts who did come to class, braving the horrible possibility of having to talk about something that didn't fit into the formula:

v - VS
Km - S
and therefore they knew little about, a thunderous vote by two of the class to have a discussion was met by 20 pairs of eyes vacantly staring back, pleading: "Can we please go and find out a little more about the 'Biosynthesis of Carbohydrates from Two - Carbon Compounds' ". Obviously the class continued, unsullied by any consideration of people dying.

Now, so that I won't be misunderstood as an 'arts' student - ignorant of the biochemical pathways of life, decrying those sciences I know nothing about - I am a third year science student and I certainly enjoy my studies.

Blame for some of the world's evils cannot be ludicrously thrown onto the study of science, per se, but rather onto some of those who study it. I know that there are men of conscience somewhere in the world of

science, but my classmates show little promise of being the saviors of the world, and cinimally, not even wanting to be.

When I was in Israel, a friend of mine who had been in charge of rescuing the surviving Jews from the concentration camps of Nazi Germany showed me some of the labels from the cans of Cyklon B, the gas which the Nazis used to murder so many millions. The label was just like any of those you find on the various bottles and vials in my chemistry labs. It gave the name and location of the manufacturer, the various physical and chemical data, and also a little sign saying, "Danger! - Poison". It struck me as a little bit absurd to see that warning note on the side of a gas manufactured by German chemists, who knew for what the gas was used.

I am not trying to draw a parallel between the research, the men of science are pursuing here and the abominations of the Nazi 'scientists', but only to show how people can allow atrocities (like Auschwitz, Biafra and Vietnam) to occur without raising their feeble voices in at least a yelp of protest from the midst of a hectic year of biochemistry note-taking.

Since I must spend the rest of the year with my classmates in labs and classes, I'll try to be with them scientifically, but I'll find it hard to accompany them spiritually.

The greatness of science is in its potential to improve the lives of everybody, not just the privileged few who can get their B. Sc's to go and get a well-paid job manufacturing tranquilizers to calm their guilty consciences - if they ever have them.

Mark Clarfield

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