

Critic of bureaucracy defends Senate role

By DALE RITCH

My purpose in writing this opinion piece is to offer an explanation to the students of York University as to why I ran for the York senate.

As a member of the York Young Socialists and an advocate of student-faculty-staff control of the university, I have been a longstanding critic of bureaucratic and undemocratic institutions like the Senate and the Board of Governors. On first glance, it would appear that I am placed in a contradictory position by sitting on the Senate. However, there are some good reasons for my participation on this body.

First, I would like to present a brief analysis of the senate outlining what it does and who controls it.

Full membership is 150, although there are a few vacancies at present. A rough breakdown of membership shows where the power lies. Administration 10 per cent; departmental and divisional chairmen 30 per cent; faculty (elected by faculty councils) 35 per cent; students 10 per cent; others (including one staff rep.) 10 per cent. Faculty members must comprise an absolute majority of the senate. All the faculty members with the exception of one are either professors, assistant professors or associate professors. Power effectively rests in the hands of the most conservative layer of the

faculty, endowed in most cases with tenure.

The majority of Senate faculty members occupy dual administrative-faculty positions. Included in this category are assistant deans, deans, and departmental and division chairmen. This contradictory situation ties these faculty members into the administrative apparatus. Such faculty have every interest in maintaining the status quo to protect their well-paid and secure positions.

On the other hand, students, non-academic staff, and non-tenured faculty have only token representation in the Senate.

The 15 student senators are not elected directly by the student body but are appointed by the various student councils. Most of the members of the student Senate caucus are more interested in pursuing their social goals and future careers than they are in fighting for the interests and needs of students. The Senate is an institution which represents the interests of a slim layer of privileged faculty members and administration, and is totally removed from any student control.

SENATE POWERS

The York University Act outlines the powers and functions of the academic policy. Some facets of academic life under its aegis include admissions policy, curricula, grades, examinations, bursaries and scholarships, and diplomas. However, the Senate makes

its decisions within a framework established by the Board of Governors and the President's Advisory Council.

The Board has ultimate responsibility over all money matters, although it normally acts as a rubber stamp for decisions made by the President's Advisory Committee (president, deans, assistant deans). The board also chooses the university president.

The real power at York rests in the hands of the corporate-controlled board of Governors and in the PAC. (The board, by the way, has final jurisdiction over the hiring and firing of the members of the advisory body.)

SUBSERVIENCE

A good example of the subservience of the Senate and faculty to the board is being demonstrated by the most recent budget cut-backs. Due to government reduction in education spending, York faces an operational deficit this year of approximately \$1.4 million. The only decision the Senate can make is to accept the budget cuts and decide where and how to make them. The composition of the Senate makes it very unlikely that any opposition to the cuts will develop there. To do this, the senate would have to challenge the York University Act, the legal foundation on which the university rests.

The conservative nature of the Senate, lack of student control, and inherent political

weakness are factors which make this institution a totally inadequate body for representing student needs and interests. At the same time, the Senate should not be totally ignored.

EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES

The Senate's 18 effective committees deal with many key aspects of university life. Most important, the Senate provides a viable forum from which oppressive and regressive policies can be opposed. The Senate is a good place to initiate campaigns against such reactionary measures as the impending cut-backs in teaching and library staff. However, students should not have any illusions that the Senate can effectively challenge the anti-education policies of the government. By organizing masses of students against the government and big business-controlled Board of Governors, though, some minor gains can be won. In any case, the conservative outlook of the Senate will become more and more obvious to York students and workers as the government steps up its attack on the education system.

I see my role on the Senate as being a means to advance the cause of students and workers on this campus, a cause which will eventually lead to the students, faculty and staff at York assuming control of the university and operating the campus in the interests of the working people of Canada.

Opinion

How the UFW hopes to win contract with growers

By STEVE HAIN

"We go hungry to put food on your table but Dominion doesn't care.

With that banner heading a pamphlet the United Farm Workers wage their battle against the powerful and corrupt growers and buyers.

The Dominion food store chain is a prime target of the UFW. Dominion is the largest buyer of grapes and lettuce in Canada and appears to support the growers. This is evident by their lack of pressure on the growers to renew contracts that expired in April: contracts that had supplied the workers with a means of putting enough food on the table.

Before the contracts were signed in 1970, the workers were earning 95 cents an hour per family. They were picking in fields that were constantly being sprayed with insecticides, resulting in numerous deaths.

They worked in temperatures exceeding 100°F. with no rest periods and the only available water in an open bucket in the fields.

Children as young as five were employed. As a result, few workers never received a formal education.

There were no toilet facilities in the fields. The workers were also paid in cash instead of by cheque. Therefore the government did not deduct for social security or unemployment insurance. There was also no formal medical plan.

In 1962, Cesar Chavez began organizing the farmworkers to bring a halt to this exploitation.

In 1965 the first strike was set into motion. The growers soon demonstrated their power when they obtained injunc-

tions restricting the space between picketers to a minimum of one hundred feet. Picketers were not allowed within one hundred feet of the farms and could not picket for more than one hour.

The UFW set up a continent wide boycott from 1967-1970. Many major buyers of the grapes and lettuce had cancelled their orders, forcing the growers to sign three year contracts with the UFW.

The workers won all their major demands in the contract talks. They were now being paid \$1.75 an hour, the use of pesticides was controlled, child labour was abolished, rest periods and fresh water were provided, and government aid was instituted. The growers also paid ten cents per person per hour toward a medical fund.

But the contract also gave the growers three years to plan their revenge.

On March 30, 1973, the growers walked out of a meeting with the UFW and refused to negotiate new contracts. On April 15 the contracts ran out and the workers were forced to go on strike. Frightened growers reverted to the use of hired hands, terrorists who intimidated and hospitalized hundreds, at the cost of \$67.50 a day.

Injunctions limited strikers to ten per ranch, spaced one hundred feet apart. The use of bullhorn communication was limited to one hour per day.

On Aug. 16, union member Juan de la Cruz was shot by a sniper and worker Nagi Daifullah was alleged to have been murdered by a blow to the head administered by a sheriff's deputy.

This, coupled with a Justice Department rejection of

protection, was instrumental in taking the issue out of the fields and into the supermarkets, in the form of a continent wide boycott.

Maria Quintana, who appeared on Radio York's Bearpit Session last Thursday, came to Toronto to explain first hand the plight of the worker, having been one for ten of her twenty years.

She echoed the sentiments of La Causa when she said, "those aren't grapes in those stores, they're people."

Quintana is working with transplanted Californian Sandy Cates, who is one of the co-leaders of the Toronto campaign.

Dominion plays a key part in their strategy. When they remove the grapes from their shelves the other food chains will follow suit.

Last Friday evening a picket line assembled at the Dominion store on Keele and Wilson turned away 22 people.

That represents a nice sum. Even if a person was only shopping for a few items, store managers will not know that and will compute the loss as the average person spends multiplied by the number of persons turned away. The average grocery bill is set at somewhere between \$25 and \$35. Once a company bank book becomes lighter, the greater the stress on public opinion.

The way to help is to not only boycott grapes and lettuce but to also man picket lines to clear store shelves.

Any information may be obtained by writing Marshall Ganz care of Post Office Box 461, Adelaide Street Station, or by phoning 961-4434.

Letters To The Editor

All letters should be addressed to the Editor, c/o Excalibur, room 111 central Square. They must be double-spaced, typed and limited to 250 words. Excalibur reserves the right to edit for length and grammar. Name and address must be included for legal purposes but the name will be withheld upon request.

Track record of unions in chaotic Britain sign to staff, reader warns

A few words regarding YUSA — salary negotiations — and the YUSA meeting, Jan 15, 1974.

It is my understanding, and that of many other YUSA members, that we voted several meetings ago for YUSA to represent us and speak as our bargaining agent with the university. Having done so we are expecting this properly designated organization to do so. We are also expecting good faith from the university, which has so bargained with YUFA which is not a legally Labour Relations backed union.

YUSA, however, unlike YUFA, has a problem, since it is open ground for union organizers. From the union's point of view, they have much to lose at York and other Ontario universities if we continue in the present format. We on the other hand have much to gain if we do retain the present format and much to lose if we don't.

From the legal advice we hear at a previous meeting, it would be impossible for a union to

be formally and legally constituted this year and bargain as our agent. The union and their few sympathizers also know this. This places them — not us — in a difficult position. For if we continue in our present format, and borrow from the experience of the very successful University of Alberta Association, and our duly delegated negotiating committee is dealt with in good faith by the university and brings forward a favourable package to present to the members this year — which from the information given at the meeting, they have (11% raise offered by administration) — then CUPE is in the unpleasant situation of possibly losing its members in the present custodial category. For the custodial staff have recognized the advantage of combining lots with the rest of the non-academic staff as is the case at the University of Alberta. As other Ontario universities are watching to see if York is going to be a leader in this area, you can understand the concern of CUPE which stands to lose branches and income.

Now to Jan 15th meeting — for an opener, an attempt was made to put aside the agenda, which most of us had come to deal with. Had the agenda been put aside, it would have made it impossible for the duly delegated Negotiating Committee to go back to the administration

with any feedback from the organization and therefore unable to present an opinion to the administration on our behalf. This would have definitely weakened the committee's position and jeopardized the members' situation. It would have, however, strengthened the union's position since the present committee would not get a chance to show what it could do given backing.

Secondly, many had come to hear Mr. Arnold, brought especially from the University of Alberta because of requests to hear more about that association. This they were denied, for as time shortened, the agenda was quickly rearranged — this time without a vote — to accommodate what was most obviously a prepared and memorized question and answer skit designed to confuse. For equally obviously, it was not to the union's advantage that we members of YUSA and the CUPE represented staff hear more about the most successful University of Alberta Association from the articulate and informative Mr. Arnold.

Only two thoughts more. Firstly, it is my opinion, and that of practically all others I have heard, that the Faculty Association, YUFA, as received as much "good faith" from the administration as CUPE, and it is a very well

known fact which has had the most cuts. Secondly, regardez the track record of unions — chaotic Britain!

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