

# Editorial

## Liberal government fails to keep promise of aid to universities

The Ontario Liberal government's policy on higher education since assuming power ten months ago brings to mind an adage penned in 1849 by Alphonse Kerr: The more things change the more they stay the same.

The Liberals promised last April they would restore the quality of Ontario's universities, currently ranked ninth in Canada. But ironically Premier Peterson's first budget in October increased the basic operating grants of the universities by only four per cent in each of the next two years. This figure falls short of the rate of inflation, further reducing the operating grants of the already beleaguered universities.

By contrast, the Council of Ontario Universities, a body comprised of all the Ontario university presidents, says annual basic funding would have to increase by \$170 million immediately just to raise Ontario to the national average.

So far the provincial Liberals have done nothing more than high profile political manoeuvring. Amidst much ballyhoo a \$50 million Excellence Fund was announced. But in light of the dire need of Ontario Universities this is little more than a political gesture.

In addition, the government hastily assembled the Adlington Task Force to examine how basic research at Ontario universities can be developed to "enhance the strength and competitiveness of Canadian industry." Thankfully, this misguided task force, with its overly general mandate, is months overdue, and with any luck its report will never see the light of day.

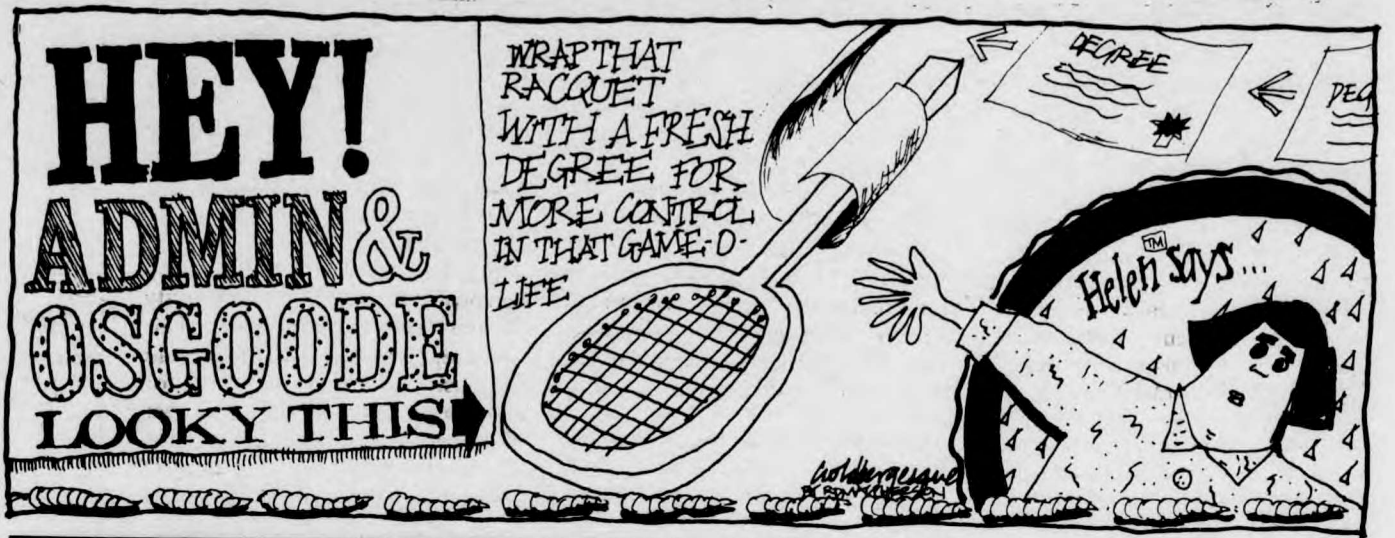
From all indications it would appear that the Liberal government is still not serious about reversing Ontario's shameful stand on post-secondary education. With enrolment figures at record levels, the already crippled system needs serious attention. High student/teacher ratios, outdated laboratory equipment, physical plant upkeep and library resources, are just some aspects of the system that are in critical need of adequate funding.

Here at York, the second most poorly funded school in the province, the situation is especially desperate. The current funding formula cheats York out of much needed income. For each dollar York receives in operating grants, other Ontario universities receive about \$1.30.

Federal/Provincial transfer payments, originally earmarked for higher education in Ontario, are still being siphoned off into other areas of the system. Most of the money York does get from the provincial government must be used for the physical upkeep of an already overburdened institution.

More disturbingly, York is being penalized by the current fee distribution for foreign students. York collects 17% of the province's foreign student fees, but is only retaining 8%. The rest is being redistributed throughout the system at a loss to York of \$2.5 million annually. At the very least, the majority of the foreign student fees should remain at York in order to fund programs which would benefit the high number of foreign students.

If the Liberal government is to make good on its election promises to restore the quality of Ontario's universities, it must offer more than rudderless task forces and high profile Excellence Funds.



## Letters

### Reader assails Afghan feature

Editor:

After reading Nazim Baksh's article (Afghanistan: Seven Years After the Invasion), I feel compelled to write. The article's errors and half-baked hypotheses would be humorous, if the subject they applied to were not so tragic.

Mr. Baksh seems to have a very hazy notion of the geopolitical reality in that region. In fact, his overall knowledge of Pakistan and Afghanistan leave something to be desired.

To begin with, there is no province named Peshawar in Pakistan, but there is the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), where the majority of refugees are located, whose capital happens to be named Peshawar.

In a most ridiculous assertion the author states that "the war has not yet seriously affected Afghanistan's neighbors." Nothing could be farther from the truth in the case of Pakistan. The invasion of Afghanistan led to the infusion of over \$3 billion worth of military and economic aid, courtesy of the US, into Pakistan, and, at the same time turned the international image of President General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistan's strong man, from one of dictator to one of anti-communist crusader.

Despite the claim of Mr. Baksh, the countries of the Middle East, and the Gulf, are very involved in the conflict. The fundamentalism of the Mujahidden is a worry, but domination by the USSR of the Persian Gulf has resulted in aid.

Afghanistan is a landlocked nation, so it is hard to understand a later comment by Baksh, where he states that Afghanistan has strategic value because it offers access to a warm water port. In fact, the only value of Afghanistan is its location as a stepping stone to the warm water ports of Iran and Pakistan.

A later statement, with no basis in fact, states that the "US is forced to assist the cause of the Mujahidden." The truth of the matter is that the United States is more than glad to aid anybody that will fight a proxy war on its behalf, and at the same will discredit the Soviets in the eyes of third world nation.

Finally, the concluding sentence, in which the author muses "whether Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev will prolong the war or continue in the fashion established by Leonid Brezhnev." Maybe Baksh meant to say "end" instead of "prolong," since the sentence makes no sense otherwise.

It is disappointing to see a newspaper of the quality of *Excalibur* fall to the low shown in this article. —Omar Khan

### CUEW's Quek irked

Editor:

Re: Report in York's *Excalibur* "Pro-choice forum..." by Drazen Bulat, p. 2, *Excalibur* (March 6, 1986).

When I read the report by Bulat in the above mentioned issue of the *Excalibur*, I was rather irked by a claim made by Glenna Caldwell, the executive secretary of CUEW Local 3, during the first pro-abortion forum held by York Students

For Choice. According to Bulat's article, "Caldwell... outlined the contribution that a union such as CUEW makes to the pro-choice movement."

As a member of CUEW Local 3, I was not aware of CUEW's alleged "contributions" to the pro-abortion stand, and marvelled at the audacity of Caldwell, in an outright abuse of her position as a representative of union members, as she flouted the constitution of the rights to individual freedom of members of the union who hold alternative views to pro-abortion.

CUEW is an Educational Worker's union, certainly not a marketplace for one's personal opinions to be imposed on all under the umbrella of CUEW membership. If pro-abortion were indeed an official CUEW stand, then that stand should be clearly and quickly communicated to all members of CUEW. And if "pro-choice" were truly the CUEW position, then it stands to reason that members in disagreement with that position should be given the free choice to withdraw membership from the union.

On the other hand, if pro-abortion were not an official position, then it is only reasonable that Caldwell, as the executive secretary of CUEW, should publicly state that her comments on pro-abortion are absolutely a matter of her individual opinion, and, in view of the *Excalibur* report, that she publicly apologize for misusing the name of CUEW without the membership's knowledge or approval.

—T. Quek  
member, CUEW Local 3

### Red herring debate

Editor:

At the centre of all the furor is the contention by Mr. Cal Bricker that apartheid South African ambassador, Mr. Glenn Babb, has the right to a public forum. Of late that ambassador of apartheid has been scurrying from debate-hall to debate-hall looking for open ears. No one is saying that Mr. Babb should be stopped because he might convince people to his racist cause. I do not suppose for a second that ambassador Babb's glib nazisms can fool anyone of good will.

Those who support the contention that Mr. Babb has a right to a public platform say that the issue at stake is freedom of speech. They claim that if Mr. Babb is refused a forum to make apartheid look good, then Canadian freedom of speech would suffer, and worse, Canada would become like apartheid South Africa. Thus, Mr. Cal Bricker believes that "[d]enial of free speech to choke dissent and debate... rings exactly like the argument P.W. Botha makes to stifle the movement against Apartheid [his cap] in South Africa." But the argument is a sad and desperate one; it is clear that no country becomes an apartheid South Africa simply by refusing to provide a paid defender of racism with a public platform. And it matters little that this man comes quoting Shakespeare.

Mr. Cal Bricker's argument of free speech in this case is a red herring. The true matter at stake is whether or not a person may enjoy the freedom to mount a defense of blatant racism in public at public expense.

In all of this it is easy to forget that apartheid is about the willful, systematic killing of people, the wild crash of gun-

butt on fragile bone, the absolute denial of the essential humanity of people—women, children, men—on the flimsy basis of skin color. It is strange indeed that Mr. Cal Bricker's much-vaunted sense of decorum does not seem at all disturbed by any of their atrocities.

The war against apartheid will not be won in the trenches of Central Square or Grad. Pub, or by what we say here in the *Excalibur*; but it says a lot about us in how we respond to a political system so wrong that even its first citizen, Mr. Botha, is today busy casting about for new ways to camouflage it.

—Kojo Opoku-Agyemang

### Nyke nukes Moens

Editor:

Re: "Student defends drunk Prof.," *Excalibur*, March 13.

I am utterly shocked at the response of Cecilia Moens letter regarding P. Hubbard's, *Excalibur*, March 6 response to his encounter with his drunken professor. How can anyone defend such an inexcusable action, such as what this natural science professor committed. How can you, C. Moens, honestly say that P. Hubbard was self-righteous and ignored the fact that because he (prof.) was drunk, (and that he is noted to have a drinking problem) it was this that made the lectures interesting what otherwise, "could have been drudgery." C. Moens further stated that P. Hubbard was, "so attentive to his (prof.) shortcomings as to have missed his admirable qualities." What?! I think you, Miss Moens, have missed the vital point. It is a breach of respect that was violated not only to the University, but to the York students, in particular to the natural science students involved. C. Moens also added that, regarding P. Hubbard's noteworthy letter, "his unsubstantiated generalizations will only serve to undermine York's faculty in general." I think it is obvious that it's this drunken professor who will be a disgrace to York's faculty. It is exactly these types of incidents that should be made known to the public and/or to the respective authorities, and which should not be overlooked and considered a minor problem, (if you, C. Moens, admit this at all). Is this the quality of education that York students should expect, especially considering the money involved. I strongly disagree with your proposition that, "P. Hubbard's inability to recognize or to care about the ramifications of his self-righteous moralizing," is valid. The fact is that he did recognize the actions; it's up to the professor in question to deal with the ramifications, of which he was not moralizing but simply acknowledging the serious problem. C. Moens, next time you respond to a letter, check your premises!

—Barbara Nyke

### Stop the bickering

Editor:

Barry Chatterton started it all be calling members of the anti-apartheid movement 'goons' (*Excalibur*, Feb. 6th, 1986). When some members of the movement decided to educate and inform Chatterton, Cal Bricker proceeded to defend him by assaulting those respectable people who are committed to freedom in South Africa and to human justice

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