

BOG Rep Report

Massive deficit ahead?

I hope the first part of this column is unnecessary and I wish that the second part were.

Part I - Deficit Budget

All of the figures quoted in this part of the column are drawn from my memory for reasons which are outlined in Part II. I am sure that someone will take the trouble to write and correct any errors which have the effect of making a major difference in my analysis.

All of us who make a habit of following the financial situation at York University know that the administration has managed to produce a "positive variable" in the operating budget over the last several years. Last year it was some \$465,000 and the year before that \$1.2 million.

In the current fiscal year (80-81) this university is budgeted to have an operating deficit of some \$1.6 million. Chancellor John Roberts before moving approval of the budget last spring stated that "a deficit is a means to an end."

The question I would like to pose today is "what end?" It has been very clear to me over the years that I have participated in budget discussions that nobody in the administration likes deficits of any kind. They have worked very hard to eliminate York's operating deficit and wittled down the capital deficit until there is only about \$1.2 million left.

Many members of the University community have argued that deficit budgeting is the only viable alternative for the university at this

time. Some have maintained that it was necessary for financial reasons and others, like myself, have maintained that a deficit would have political advantages in convincing the Ontario government to fund Universities better. Last spring we seemed to have won a substantial victory for the benefits of deficit budgeting. Now I am not so sure.

I believe that the administration and some members of the Board embarked on an exercise which is designed to convince those who are less than completely informed about York's finances that deficit budgets are the worst thing for this University. I say this because I see a number of things happening now which would cause York to have an unexpectedly large deficit at the end of this fiscal year.

First of all the quarterly statements at the Board in September showed expenditures to be about half a million dollars more than one quarter of the year's budgeted expenditure. Vice-President Bell indicated that this was "nothing to worry about"; the usual sort of beginning of the year cash flow situation.

Secondly the Board is currently talking about listing its stocks and bonds in a different manner. This has to do with the current value of some of the Universities investments being worth more when purchased than they are on the stock market at present. This could result in an apparent loss of some \$2 million or so.

Taken all together York could appear to have a massive deficit at the end of the year which would in fact be nothing more than calculated overspending to make up for recent underspending, and some highly opportune changes in the administration's accounting practices.

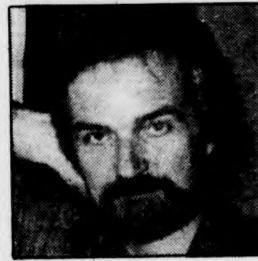
I hope that I am wrong and York will come out on budget this year.

Part II - Office Space

The reason that all the figures quoted in Part I are estimates is that my files are either crated up in the basement or piled under my bed. The reason that there are no telephones, offices and other amenities available to student members of Senate and the Board is far too long and sordid a tale to tell here. Suffice to say that other Universities (notably our neighbour to the south) provide the necessities of coping with bureaucracy to their student representatives and that everybody in York's Administration from the President down (I have it on good authority) agree that York should but nobody seems to be able to pry any of the current users loose from their telephones, offices or filing cabinets.

This has been going on, I must add, for the best part of a year. I have heard rumours of professors practically going to war in order to get a new filing cabinet but this is getting ridiculous.

This column represents the view of Peter Brickwood and not necessarily those of Excalibur or its advertisers.



Robin Wood on censorship

"Change everything. But where do you begin? Everywhere. Now."

Jane Fonda in Godard's *Tout Va bien*

Currently outrage against the Ontario Board of Film Censors—its arbitrary criteria, its anti-progressive decisions, its continuing secrecy (when it can get away with it), and its operations—is entirely justified. Yet there is a grave danger of this becoming perceived as a separate issue, even of its becoming a substitute for all the other issues, channelling off energy from wider concerns.

Censorship is an easy target for our rage, providing it with both a focus and a limited aim. But it is only one instance—and by no means the most important—of the functioning of oppressive patriarchal structures. It would be a pity if the present censorship regime were overthrown and its antagonists then settled down with a complacent sense of victory. Victory, for anyone who believes seriously and responsibly in the possibility of a liberated society, is a very long-term goal indeed.

An attack on censorship should have, as its necessary corollary, an attack on our whole educational system—a far more daunting project. The only argument for censorship that has apparent validity is the argument that people in our society are not equipped to cope (emotionally, morally, intellectually) with the experiences the media offer them. But this immediately provokes the

obvious question, why are they not equipped?, and the only possible answer is, because our educational system does nothing to equip them.

There is a logical enough reason for this failure: despite its intermittent protests against media excess (sex-and-violence), the educational system dares not promote a true awareness of what the media do and how they operate, because it shares with the media the same ideological base (the assumptions that underlie and sanction patriarchal capitalism).

Education as we have it is committed, not to helping people understand our culture (which could only lead to a desire to transform it), but to slotting people into culture as it exists, most obviously in terms of career-training, but beyond that in terms of the acceptance of our society's norms, which rest ultimately upon repression and alienation. The censorship we should be campaigning most emphatically against is that which banishes the tools of awareness from our (pre-university) school curricula, in which the two seminal figures of our century, Marx and Freud, have no place except as bogeymen: where Feminism, the most important radical movement in North America, is either ignored, safely liberalized, or discussed only in classes for girls only; and where Media Studies generally means, not an analysis of the media as the means of oppression and exploitation, but the training of pupils for possible careers within them.

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