

Excalibur

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

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YUSA members must elect strong executive to protect association

This is a decisive week for the York University Staff Association. YUSA's 700 members are casting two ballots, and the outcome will influence the lives of all support staff at York in years to come.

The first ballot is being conducted by the executive, and gives members the choice of three options: consensual agreement, voluntary recognition, or collective bargaining through certification.

The second ballot will decide the new executive for the crucial bargaining sessions coming up.

But the voting is significant for other

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reasons.

Behind the facade of democracy is a tangle of confusion, misinformation and downright illegality. The facts add up to a scathing condemnation of the way the YUSA executive has abrogated its responsibilities in carrying out the wishes of the membership.

VOLUNTARY GROUP FAVOURED

On Oct. 25, the YUSA membership voted overwhelmingly in favour of a voluntary association; there were only 8 dissenting votes.

The executive argued in favour of the voluntary association at that time because, although it offers full protection under the Ontario Labour Relations Act, fewer supervisory staff would be excluded.

That is, if YUSA were to take the usual route and apply for union certification, many of the supervisory staff would not be eligible.

The issue of supervisory staff was to become a decisive factor in subsequent events. The executive was given a mandate to return to the membership within 60 days with a report on the administration's response.

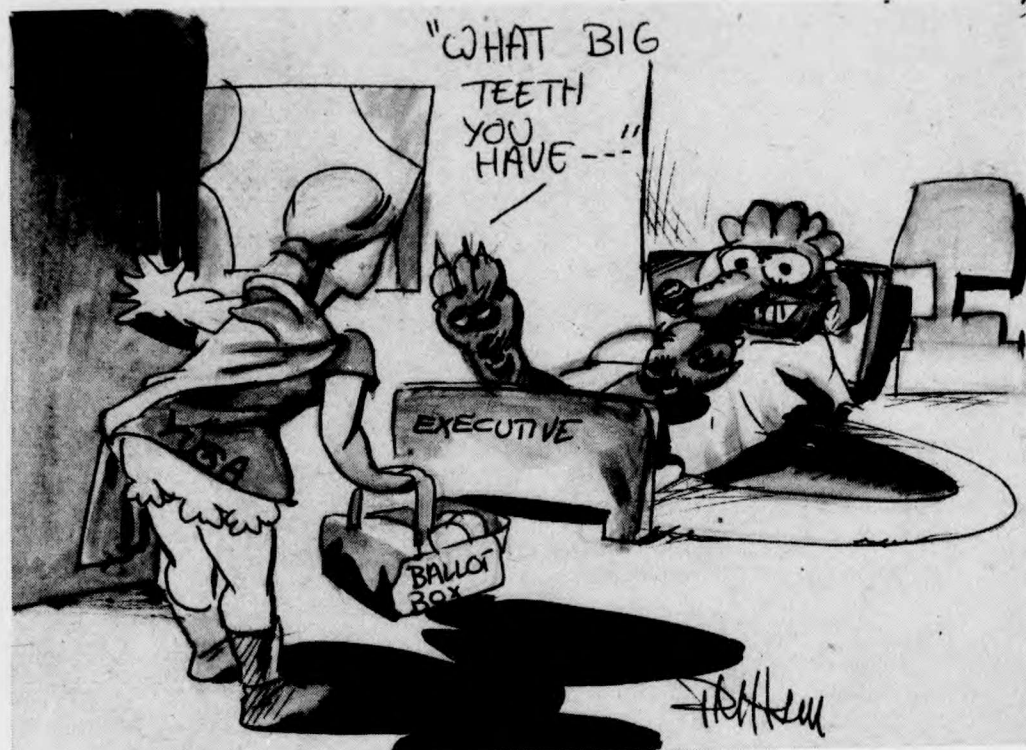
In December, the administration agreed in principle to a voluntary association and also indicated that no more than 30 YUSA members would be excluded on the grounds that they were managerial staff.

However, in subsequent meetings, the administration began to hint — but only to hint — that up to 200 staff members potentially could be excluded from YUSA.

At this point, the executive panicked. Ernest Rovet, YUSA's lawyer discovered the federal Arbitration Act and Consensual Agreement. Under this plan, no one would be excluded from YUSA, not even certain executive members who earn up to \$20,000 a year.

CONSENSUAL AGREEMENT

But a consensual agreement is not a bargaining unit. It is merely a legal agreement between two parties. It assumes that both parties are equals — that YUSA, for instance, has the same financial resources to hire lawyers and pay court costs and the cost of arbitrators as the York University



administration.

The executive, without consulting the members, without even informing all of the executive members, and in flagrant violation of the mandate received Oct. 25, arranged a meeting with the administration to begin negotiations for consensual agreement.

Meanwhile a growing group of YUSA members dissatisfied with the executive had begun to organize.

Again, acting completely on its own initiative, the executive decided to hold a ballot so the members could vote again on the type of bargaining unit they want for YUSA.

The ballot is completely illegal according to the YUSA constitution.

Moreover the executive is giving the membership a third option — union certification. This will only divide the vote needlessly. At this point in time, certification is nothing but a red herring.

EXEC. NEWSLETTER

In a newsletter to all YUSA members dated Jan. 29, the executive advised members to vote for consensual agreement, and has continued to do so informally. What this amounts to in effect is a request for a vote of confidence on the executive's proven ability to proceed on its own volition without the consent of members.

This vote bears a direct relation to the second vote — the election of the new YUSA executive.

Members will vote for two slates of candidates — one an official slate, the other an unofficial slate. The first, led by Gabriele Paddle as the Presidential candidate, is united in its determination to go for voluntary recognition, with protection

under the Labour Relations Act.

The other candidates, while not appearing as a group, have all more or less indicated at election meetings their intention to continue the disastrous policies of the old executive.

Most YUSA members are women. Many of them have husbands and small children to look after. They simply do not have the time to be active in the staff association.

Many assume the executive knows what it's doing and they will vote for the consensual agreement.

GROWING DISCONTENT

For the record, both presidential candidates have stated they will carry through the result of the vote, if elected. The point, however, is that the executive, in the face of growing discontent, is setting up events this week to guarantee the continuation of collaboration with the administration. This type of manipulation is more than just dishonest; it gives the administration exactly what it wants — a weak staff association unable to protect its own members.

A consensual agreement is a gentleman's agreement. It has nothing to do with the real economic problems faced by York staff in the light of rising costs of living. The only way to guarantee higher wages and better working condition is a strong association, voluntary if necessary.

Gabriele Paddle and the 13 members of the pro-voluntary association slate are the obvious choices for a strong YUSA executive.

They would be a far cry from the self-serving YUSA leadership this year that brought it to its present state of disorganization and confusion.

Versafood price is almost a vice

In line with his ability to reduce the most calamitous situations to a few well-chosen phrases of child-like simplicity, York English professor Ivor E. Tauer has agreed to be interviewed on the food increases at York.

He started by admitting that, since he spent most of his time in the faculty lounge, he had never had the opportunity to dine in the Central Square cafeteria. Excalibur remedied this by paying his way through a normal evening meal in the cafeteria, and, when professor Tauer emerged from the Jane-Finch hospital five hours later, he was more than eager to share his observations.

"I apologize," he began, "for taking that extra pat of butter with my roll. I realize your budget is a trifle strained..."

"Quite all right," we replied,

remembering his agonized deliberation over whether to take the large or small portion of french fries. "We realize your carrots would have been rather tasteless without a bit of butter."

"Carrots?" he replied. "Is that what they were?"

Prof. Tauer was also surprised when we told him he had been served a breast of chicken.

"Funny, I don't remem... Oh! Of course. I kept pulling at that fatty brown stuff expecting to find something underneath, and sure enough, I found some sort of bone structure. I thought that was all there was to it. But now that you mention it, I do remember something white hanging on to one of the lower bones."

He said he had sent the bones to a friend in the anatomy department. A quick check revealed that his friend

had thrown them into a handy trash can. He was somewhat irate when we called.

"Was that supposed to be some kind of joke?" he spat. "I knew something was out of whack, and when I saw the 'Aurora' symbol stamped on the bottom..."

Professor Tauer avoided paying for a cool drink by craftily asking the server for a glass of water ("clever how they don't put a tap within reach, so that you wind up buying milk or a soft drink").

"I didn't have to pay for the water the first time," he said, "but the second time they got me for 15 cents."

As for the cole slaw, the professor admitted that he had shovelled two servings into one, and then forgotten to pay for either of them. "They slipped under my fork, and I couldn't see them."

For dessert, professor Tauer had a piece of cherry pie, and was overjoyed to find a cherry in it. "The glue must have held it in place," he remarked. "A colleague told me he once bought a cherry pie, only to find the cherries were a front for some rather vile raisins."

"Another time he found a piece of cellophane moving about in his cottage cheese, and when he went back to complain, the server charged him an entertainment tax."

Tauer's best movement came as he exited from the servery and presented the cashier with a \$20 bill.

"I'm sorry, sir," she said. "We don't have change."

"That's all right," he replied. "With meat, potatoes, a drink and dessert, I figure I don't have change coming anyway."

Excalibur

staff meeting

at 4 p.m.

today