

# EXCALIBUR

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

Excalibur, founded in 1966, is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. Excalibur is a member of Canadian University Press and attempts to be an agent of social change. Printed at Newsweb, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications under the auspices of the Council of the York Student Federation.

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## The meat grading mentality of universities

To the dismay of many, the university has lost its role as an educational institution and has instead become a sophisticated packing plant, grading its assorted beef before it reaches market.

It isn't true that the competitive grading system is imposed on totally unco-operative students. Too often the only discussion in many classes is the "whaddya get?" variety, an attitude that actively supports an anti-educational philosophy.

Education for its own sake has been called idealistic, yet ironically, with the ever growing difficulty for graduates to find jobs, those who choose to stay in university must face the fact that they are going to gain little more than that ideal.

Those students who willingly play the grade game, through borrowing essays, comparing marks with zeal or sucking up to profs are hypocritical if they complain of boring courses. They are asking to be rated, not stimulated.

Certainly the administration is mostly to blame for its conception and continuance of the game. Yet students, through their passive consent and co-operation, fuel a system that at its best is

unreliable and at its worst oppressive.

There are structures within the institution to help break out of passive consent and tacit co-operation with oppressive grading tactics. Participation in course unions, active involvement in the senate committees that govern York and a study of government interests (notably the recent report from the Commission of Post-Secondary Education in Ontario) are important steps.

But ultimately, the nature of the institution and the function it serves for society have to be confronted. The university is a training ground for politicians, corporate executives, teachers, lawyers and management workers who run the outside society. The grading experience in the institution is an adaptation of values operating in that market.

In refusing to play the grading game, students are confronting those values as they operate in the institution. The educational experience gained in such confrontation can have ramifications long after the university and essay due deadlines are left behind.

## Conference restates theme — repeal the abortion laws

A woman's right to control her own body is a right denied Canadian women by antiquated abortion laws.

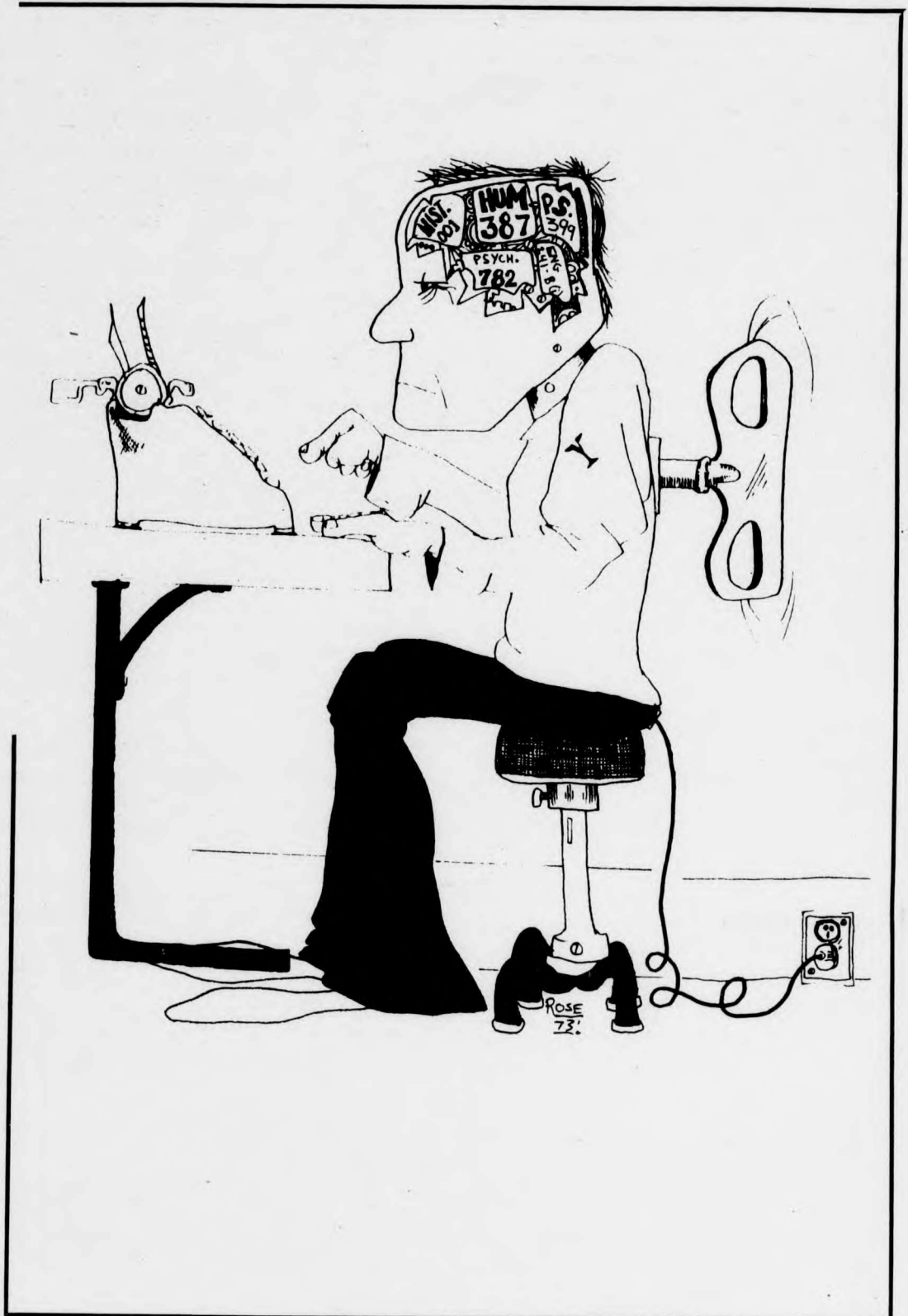
This weekend, large contingents of women from across the country will attend the Cross Canada Conference for abortion law repeal. The conference is the most recent in a long series of actions over the last three years. The aim — get abortion out of the criminal code.

Just as the state had no business in the nation's bedrooms, it has no business controlling the bodies of its female citizens. Support for abortion law repeal

is snowballing and progressive developments in the U.S. may bring about the long promised House debate on abortion.

For the moment, women must attend sessions like the one on the weekend, both for their own education and to show their continuing support.

Free abortion on demand is the right of every woman, not to be allotted according to class, education and ability to pay. This must be the intent of abortion coalitions if abortion law repeal is to truly benefit all women.



## Letters

### Letter puzzles

#### Atkinson dean

Mr. Seringhaus' puzzling letter on Atkinson college's small number of radio ads (March 1, Excalibur) may mislead your readers. The ads consist of the following statements: (1) someone may attend Atkinson while holding a job; (2) the summer session begins May 14; (3) the mature student age is now 21; (4) Atkinson has a full-time faculty, and a residence; (5) the address is 4700 Keele St.; (6) the phone number is 667-3946.

H.S. CROWE

### Send French to Glendon

Why is there a department of French literature at York university? Surely anyone wanting to study French literature also wants to become as steeped in French language, thought and culture as he possibly can, and surely this can be most successfully and easily accomplished in an atmosphere which promotes bilingualism. Glendon College is, I believe, expressly designed to offer such an atmosphere. Yet we have students studying

French literature at the main campus. And so we also have a second department of French literature at the main campus.

Most universities teach French literature in the kind of unilingual atmosphere which prevails at York's main campus. York is doing something unique and important at Glendon. And yet York also teaches French literature under ordinary conditions at the main campus. It would appear that since the opportunities for French outside the classroom are greater at Glendon and that since Glendon offers courses in French in most of its departments, in at least these respects Glendon provides a superior environment for students of French literature. So why is there also a French literature department at the main campus?

Aside from these purely academic objections to teaching French literature at the main campus, there are financial ones. As indicated in a recent Excalibur article, the future of Glendon is being debated. Glendon is expensive — but isn't a second department of French literature also expensive? Perhaps there are good reasons for this partial duplication of programs. However, one wonders if the university is not itself the source of at least some of its financial difficulties through poor planning. In this case the planning appears to be poor from an academic point of view as well as from a financial one.

B. THOMAS HALL

### Serious damage is not criteria

In the light of our student leaders' decision to end the fee strike because, in the words of our new president, "If the students do not pay their fees, the university will be seriously damaged", I would like to be advised as to how long I am expected to support the strikes against Kraft and Dare. Perhaps only until "serious damage" to the profits of these corporations is threatened.

JULIAN ZUCKERBROT

### Israeli week found offensive

We would like to draw attention to the Israeli propaganda show that is now being thrust upon us each time we have to pass through Central Square. We find that this noisome display is abnoxious and bothersome. If you will recall, much attention was drawn to a similar phenomenon in the same place earlier this year. That short talk was a low-key presentation that used only a public address system instead of the multi-media chaos of this presentation. Not only has this extravaganza littered our halls with useless flyers, but also it has created a hazard to

passers-by with teetering displays. If this were not enough, we are accosted, huckster-like, by an unsolicited cacophony of ethnic folksongs of dubious merit. We suggest that this week long show not only exploits an area "liberated" in the name of Pan-Judaism but also aggravates less aggressive minorities on campus. It would be better that Central Square be neutralized of this pervasive element or at least, "demilitantized".

BROCK QUEENSTON  
Calumet II  
MARTHA SMITH  
Phys. Ed. I

### In favour of building chapel

I am in favour of the chapel. This has apparently been delayed because there was not a yes vote of more than 50%.

Now at York students come in various ways! There are graduate residences, there are undergraduate residences, some come by public transit, some drive, some walk, some hitch hike. In this probably no one category has 50% but we try to assist everyone to get there.

Now in man's journey to the sky why should we reject a help that is offered because we have no 50% majority vote for it.

HAROLD SMITH