

# Bipin Lakhani must quit Council

Many miles separate the peaceful autumn landscape of southern Ontario from Lebanon's corpse-strewn battlefield, but the media's satellite nervous system ensures that the tremours of current events travel from one place to another.

As soldiers and civilians die in back alleys and refugee camps, many York members engage in a war of written and spoken words. The war is suddenly at our doorstep.

That students would want to debate the issues surrounding a conflict of such importance is inevitable, but unfortunately, the battle at York University consists largely of hate propaganda.

Last night at the CYSF meeting, Bipin Lakhani, Director of Social and Cultural affairs, admitted he was the propagator of just such material. It was discovered that Lakhani using CYSF facilities had had photocopied posters that are hate-inspired, hate-inspiring propaganda. The posters which were hung in Central Square and which carry a photograph of Menachem Begin read in part, "In 1947, the British government offered a \$48,000 reward for the capture of

the mass-murderer and sadistic torturer pictured here." It lists alleged activities of Begin, and says that he "boasts of these crimes as being his greatest accomplishments." The posters are designed to encourage immediate reaction and a possible misinterpretation of the situation. It is sensationalism.

Marty Zarnett, a student senator, with special permission from the Council, read a letter that revealed the presence of the posters and called for a clarification of the CYSF's stance on racist literature. After a long preamble detailing recent anti-semitic events, he explained that he and Greg Gaudet (last year's CYSF President) found the posters while searching for books in a CYSF filing cabinet.

After the Council skirted the issue of who was responsible, Randy Dobson, a member of McLaughlin College argued that Zarnett should name the CYSF member responsible for the poster or drop the matter. It was at this point that Director of

Academic Affairs, Mark Pearlman, said, "The Director of Social and Cultural Affairs made the posters." At the end of the discussion, the Council directed Lakhani to write a public letter of apology and reimburse Council for the cost of photocopying the material.

It is distressing that hate literature of all kinds is littering York's halls and that divisions within our population are becoming violent, rendering reasoned discussion impossible.

Lakhani's involvement in the propaganda war marks him as an irresponsible member of our society and his exploitation of his CYSF position endangers the reputation and accountability of the student government. Jacques Altman, Student Senate Rep., called for Lakhani's resignation but the proposal never came to a vote. The Council's unwillingness to rationally debate lack of concern that seems to be prevailing our campus. Remember, for example,

Director of York Security, George Dunn's, slow reaction to the vandalism and threats to the Jewish Student Federation.

This should be tolerated. What is required is discussion of the situation which would put into play the compassion and intelligence that are supposed to be the essence of an academic institution. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that the circumstances responsible for the recent conflict in Lebanon are not duplicated here: lessons of the past must not be ignored.

We condemn Lakhani's involvement in the political propaganda machine that seeks to undermine any possibility of reconciliation and call for his immediate resignation from the post he has no right to hold. It is obvious his loyalty to outside political interest is stronger than any respect he might have for the CYSF and the students it represents.

This should have been apparent to all CYSF members--This was not the

case.

After the meeting, for example, Judith Santos attempted to persuade *Excalibur* to suppress the information revealed at the CYSF meeting (it is a public meeting). "I don't think *Excalibur* should comment on this. It was an internal matter. I'm just offering an opinion," she said. And when *Excalibur* asked Lakhani for comment Santos cautioned him: "You shouldn't say anymore." He replied, "No comment."

And Bevilacqua told us he was "more concerned with the fact that the photocopying had been done on the CYSF photocopier." He said he would not ask for Lakhani's resignation.

Bevilacqua told Zarnett, "If you have things that concern politics, don't bring them into Council. The CYSF is not interested." He is mistaken, as he was when he said, "Politics do not belong in CYSF." Politics are the only reason he has a job.

It is time he confronted Lakhani's abuse of power and position and acknowledged his responsibility to the Council and to society as a whole.

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