

RING DAYS - October 17 & 18

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Susan Dawn Wake on

A DEFENSE OF ATHEISM

Tuesday, Oct. 16, 7 p.m.
Senior Common Room
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Students should respect pickets

While the university administration's treatment of York's faculty union (YUFA) during negotiations last month was bad enough, their behavior towards York University Staff Association (YUSA) members is, for want of a stronger but still printable word, shameful. It is an embarrassment to even belong to an institution, especially a university, that treats its employees so shabbily.

It is not so much that the administration has changed its tactics; indeed, their practice of stonewalling negotiations and forcing unions into unwanted strike situations was carried on in the same meagre spirit as it was during the YUFA negotiations, and as it has been against CUEW.

But the situation in this case is different. Of all the unions on campus, YUSA members have the least to gain, the most to lose, and are particularly vulnerable to the administration's union-busting stratagems. Their job security, for example, is minimal, and York aggravates the problem by laying off YUSA members for reasons of 'technological change,' or 'redundancy.' York then hires non-union personnel from outside the university, rather than rehire ex-employees.

In the face of this absurd and callous policy, YUSA's demands for job security and technological retraining are perfectly reasonable. The university's answer to them, a sugar-coated but nonetheless effective no, is not.

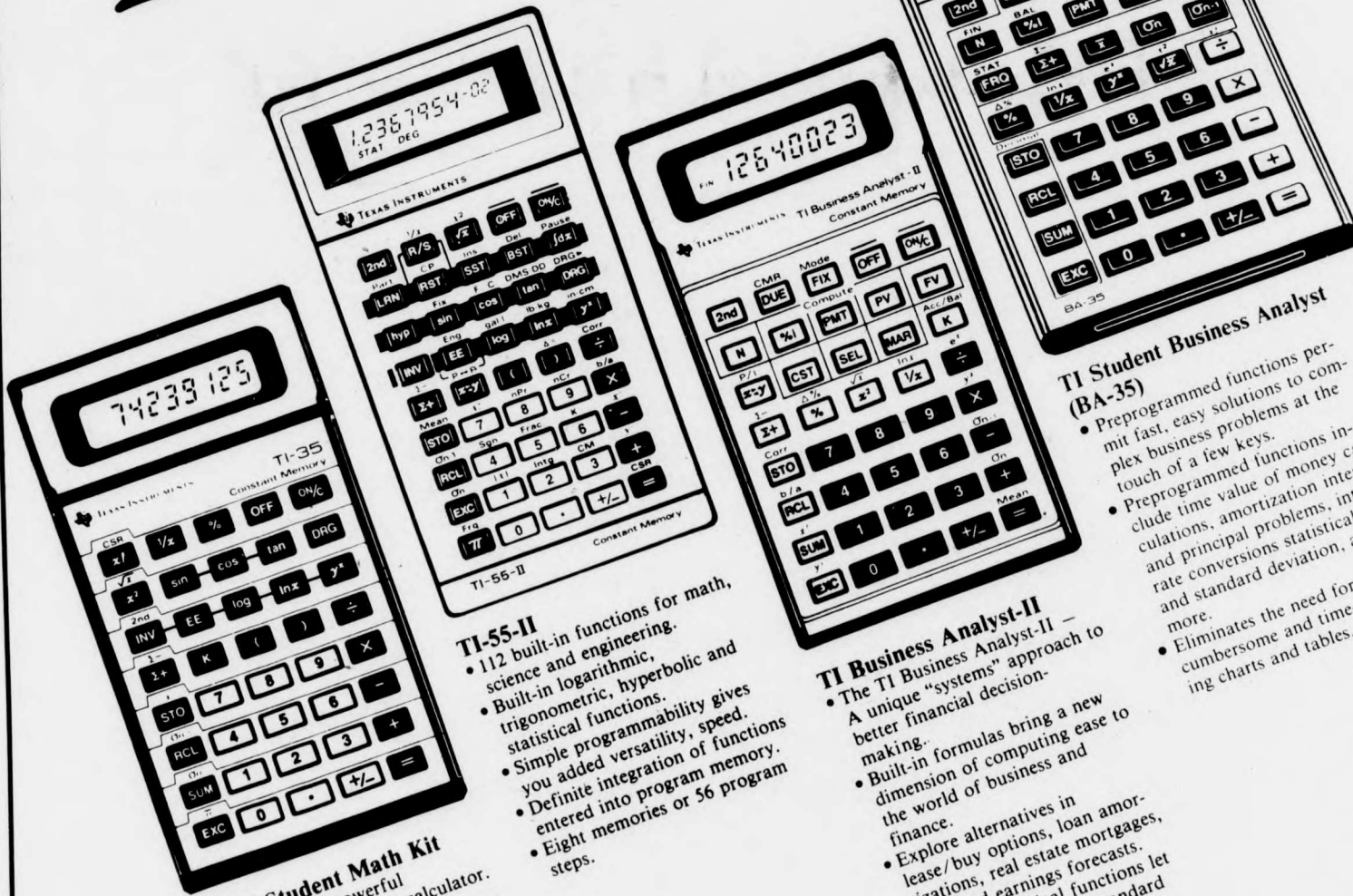
Unlike the demands of YUFA and CUEW, two unions that carry far more clout on campus, YUSA's proposals would cost the university little.

Unfortunately, while York could not function without its faculty, it can manage for some time without the full-time clerical workers YUSA represents. Of course, the students will suffer somewhat, as will just about everyone else at York who doesn't sit on the Board of Governors, but that does not at this point seem to trouble the administration.

The only viable choice now seems to be to *make* trouble for the administration. Students at York have the option of refusing to cross picket lines without incurring academic penalties. It is an option the students of this university should use.

YUSA members have been treated unfairly over the past several years, and they need support. We now have the power to give it to them.

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