

Excalibur

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

United Appeal York's pimp in Toronto

You've probably noticed it as you charged out of the Ross Humanities Building. You know, the United Appeal flag that flutters proudly and exotically in the North York breeze.

It's nice to see that York's administration keeps up the liberal dream of charity for those of a lower station. After all, it's the only nice thing to do.

But then York does live in a corporate society and it should accept all those nice corporate things like market prices, social stability, law and order and capitalist exploitation.

Perhaps it's only fitting that York remain consistent with itself. With the board of governors resembling a social register, we should accept the United Appeal's approach to things: get another list from the social register — about 40 business executives, a smattering of trade union executives, civil servants, politicians, professionals and clergymen and of course four community representatives and bingo — you have a liberal dream team doing all that's right in the land of motherhood and apple pie.

Unfortunately, like motherhood and apple pie, this liberal dream works no better than any other. For individuals it's a strong reminder that charity — like bloodletting — might be good for your conscience but when it gets down to reality it solves no problems.

To give is easier than to receive. There's no doubt about that. It's also cheaper for corporations — from Esso to Simpson Sears — to give instead of letting things get out of hand. After all, the masses might erupt.

Poverty of material goods is infinitesimal when compared to the poverty of dignity. And that is what United Appeal lacks — dignity for its clientele. It perpetuates the status quo



"I assure you sir, the money you contribute will not go to support anything so subversive as a tenant's rights group."

because it is cheaper to buy off people than to give them tools for fighting.

Tenants' rights groups are brushed off — the United Appeal might lose contributors. Community activists are harassed by police — they might be subversive. Community newspapers are allowed to fold from lack of advertising —

if the market system can't support them, they shouldn't survive. And it goes on.

York's collaboration in the United Appeal fits the wasteland habitat of North York: sterile middle class virtues feeding on material goodness with sterile restaurant drive-ins over meaningful community life action.

Instead of setting up a fund to directly help community action groups, York prefers to keep up the status quo. Like its irrelevant courses on American problems, York likes to escape the swamp close at home. It likes a clean image — so like a prostitute, it supports the local pimp, the United Appeal.

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Is it really 'cost-push' inflation?

"So-called "cost-push" inflation occurs when corporations and organized labor take out more than they're putting in A wage-price freeze that led the way back to economic realism could benefit all the high-price countries, including Canada."

The above quotes come from an Aug. 21 Toronto Star editorial which uses U.S. president Nixon's wage-price freeze as an excuse for similar action by Ottawa.

According to the Star — like Mr. Young of Ottawa's Prices and Incomes Commission — the cause of inflation is clear and simple. Our increasing cost of living is described as "cost-push" inflation, which, despite its academic overtones, simply says that labor is primarily to blame. According to this economic doctrine, union members push up corporation costs by demanding more wages. Then our poor corporations have no alternative but to push up the price to their customers. Somewhere along the line the old rule which says that prices are set by the law of supply and demand gets lost in the shuffle.

The Star is, of course, not alone in

pontificating that we have "cost-push" inflation. Our Ottawa mandarins have always considered collective bargaining to be a very untidy arrangement and could hardly be expected to admit that their own government spending was a cause of inflation. Our less successful business men and small-fry executives, who invariably regard their employee's wages as an irritating barrier to becoming a quick millionaire rather than a source of increased sales, are avid to blame everything on overpaid employees, or better still, on the unions. And most of our leading economists, who are really only learning the rudiments of measuring money and are far from being adepts of any exact science, instinctively prefer to disguise their lack of knowledge with a jargon which appeals to their potential clients in management and government.

But is the assumption that we are suffering from "cost-push" inflation true?

There are a lot of facts which everyone seems to be ignoring.

For example, the highest wages are almost invariably found in occupations where efficiency is the greatest and

productivity has increased the most and where prices have increased slowly. Our Canadian steel industry is a good example. In low productivity and inefficient areas, on the other hand, wages remain low, unemployment is high, but prices keep going up anyway.

Instead of assuming the unproven theory that we have "cost-push" inflation and, as a result, discouraging greater productivity and freezing social inequity by establishing percentage guidelines, why doesn't Ottawa stop wrangling about quick cures for "inflation"? Why doesn't it simply start in to tackle "high prices" — starting with high land costs, high interest rates, duplicating government expenditures and unnecessary food markups?

Admittedly, this won't sound as politically safe as blaming everything on big unions and, as an afterthought, big corporations. Admittedly, this won't guarantee relatively useless big brains a higher financial status than relatively useful people who work with skilled hands. But it might bring down the cost of living.

From Steel Labor News.

Staff meeting today at 1 pm