

# Letters to the Editor

Address letters to the Editor, EXCALIBUR, York University. Those typed (double-spaced) are appreciated. Letters must be signed for legal reasons. A pseudonym will be used if you have a good reason.

## Few Canadian books in print, Olson says

Sir:  
Let me congratulate you on having focussed on a very real problem in Canadian Universities in the textbooks and readings situation. And let me say also that you have handled it most irresponsibly. Your arbitrary and mechanical fashion of totalling books is in the best tradition of the American "body-count" in Viet Nam.

As examples of how misleading this procedure can be, I cite Social Science 171 and 182. Your count found only five Canadian books required in 15 Social Science and Humanities courses. But the 171 outline uses seven pieces of Canadian content. Particularly in the discussion of social class, beginning next week, there is heavy use of Canadian material. In this course, I find work by W. E. Mann, John Porter, John Seeley, B. Blisken, the Economic Council, the Hall-Dennis report and George Grant.

Your editorial rightly asks, cannot the social science course on utopias and millennial movements refer to Social Credit, the Doukhobors, the Hutterites, etc? Indeed, had you bothered to ask us, you would have found exactly this material in heavy use in the course. We have made a heavy investment in study of the Canadian Mennonites, with groups going down to meet with these people. Mr. Smith's tutorial groups plan to make a major presentation to the whole course on this study. Another group is dealing with Utopian aspects of current Metro-area educational reform. Also Social Science 180A, with Mr. Anderson, is undertaking similar and more far-reaching investigations.

Nonetheless, you have pointed to a real issue. There is not enough attention paid to Canada in our social science courses. But why is this? It's far too easy to blame the Americans. None of our courses is staffed entirely by Americans. And the Division has more Canadians in it than Americans. Americans, particularly if new to Canada, might perhaps be excused for not knowing the Canadian material yet. But what excuse is there for the Canadians not knowing it?

Surely the answer is that there is damn little in print. The textbook market here is small. And most of the publishers are in fact owned by the Americans. Within the past few weeks, I had a Canadian publisher's representative tell me that there was just not a large enough market here for a book-length report of a sensational socio-drama experiment by Canadians in Canada on Canadian content. He advised me to take the manuscript to his American affiliate in New York!

And we do try to keep the cost of course texts down. How much Canadian content is in paper-back? Again, damn little. A small market and remarkably unaggressive marketing procedures by publishers mean that there is not enough profit in paper-back Canadian social science content.

It is very difficult for harried professors to accumulate a good file of journal articles — and it's even more difficult to get them reproduced. There is as yet no Canadian equivalent to the Boobs-Merrill reprint service. A group at Queens is beginning to build a file in one of our relevant fields. I look forward to using the results. I urge everybody, including students and the general public, to let professors know — to let this division know — of relevant publications. The problem is far too large, and too important, to be dealt with by blame-laying or by waiting for someone else to do a job no one person or group can handle.

Theodore W. Olson,  
Acting Chairman,  
Social Science

We would respectfully submit that it is your procedure which is the misleading one.

As EXCALIBUR pointed out last week, in Social Science 171, *Man in Society and Nature*, Porter's *Vertical Mosaic* is the only Canadian book among the 10 required texts and 15 U.S. reprints.

The other six Canadian books you mention are designated on the course outline as "related readings" — supplementary material for those interested in pursuing a particular topic.

Of 62 such "related readings" only these six are Canadian.

This could hardly be described as "heavy use".

In Social Science 182, *Utopias*, you also



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MAN  
DEMONSTRATING HIS  
SUPERIORITY OVER  
ANIMALS.



ROBB

claim that Canadian material is in "heavy use".

Strange, because we find absolutely no mention of Mennonites, or Doukhobors, or Hutterites, or the CCF, or the Social Credit on the course outline.

In your eight page supplementary "Basic Bibliography" which lists literally hundreds of titles, we find under "Later North American Millennial Expectations", 4 books on Canadian movements.

This is what you call "heavy use"?

Surely you, as the course director, would not presume to take credit for what Mr. Carl Smith, a Canadian teaching assistant, has done at his own initiative with his tutorial groups.

As for there being "damn little in print" — please read page eight.

It might be an education.

EXCALIBUR would also challenge the statement that there are no Canadian reprint services.

Canadian Dimension and Our Generation are two Canadian publications which sell reprints of their articles.

There are probably more. Anyway, doesn't your department have access to a duplicating machine?

Oh, and about the "American body count".

Next time, how about drawing an analogy closer to home?

Some people might wonder. . . — ed.

## Davis corrects list for Social Science 176

Sir:  
Your published list of 12 February, 1970 issue is in error. Correct list for Social Science 176 (Progress and Poverty) is:  
— Required texts: 4 books, one edited by W. Edward Mann and titled Poverty in Canada

— Eight U.S. reprints and six discussion papers written by past and present lecturers in the course, and one reproduction of paper by Professor James Cutt (York University) on The Guaranteed Income.

Any point you are trying to make cannot be reinforced by the publication of incorrect 'facts'.

J. Tait David,  
Social Science.

EXCALIBUR made it clear last week that our list of required texts were "taken from the lists submitted by the course director to the York bookstore".

We had no way of knowing that Mann's book was distributed through the Social Science 176 seminar leaders to reduce costs.

We are happy to see that this book is on the course but we would submit that one book more or less doesn't significantly change the overall trend.

However, there appears to be some ambiguity as to just how "required" this book is considered to be by the teaching staff.

One seminar leader refused to circulate the book and over 100 students have not bought a copy.

## Only 1 of 18 books authored by American

Sir:  
Under the banner heading of "York's Americanization" your front page article of Feb. 12 lists Humanities 172b as including only one Canadian work out of a required list of 18 books for the course.

Firstly, a newspaper as narrowly chauvinistic as yours is striving to be, might at least take the trouble to observe the proper spelling of so celebrated a Canadian writer as Northrop (nor Northrope) Frye (not Fry).

Secondly, you mislead your readers by implying that the other 17 books in the course are by American authors. I am sure that in keeping with the high standards of accuracy that you set for your journalists you would want the public to know that of the 18 books on the required reading list for Humanities 172b ONLY ONE is by an American: Art and Technics, by Lewis Mumford. And none of the movies shown in the course are American.

Regrettably, however, this information cannot encourage you in your editorial despair. Our criteria for selecting works in the course is strictly, as Northrop Frye has argued, "to educate the imagination" of first year students in the Humanities Division.

Melvyn A. Hill,  
Humanities and  
Social Science.

EXCALIBUR has never suggested that York students study Canadian material to the exclusion of material from other cultures — that is chauvinism.

We say that Canadian students have a right to be given a perspective on how their culture, society, politics, and economics relate to those of other peoples.

Clearly, last issue's front page was more evidence that they are not getting this perspective at York.

For example, your course claims to be "an examination of selected themes fundamental to man in the modern world, such as the problem of knowledge, ideas of aesthetics, the nature of scientific investigation, religious values, and ideals of the good society. . ."

Canadians are not sub-humans, or illiterate — such themes have manifested themselves in our culture.

To suggest that one Canadian book, out of a total of 55 texts on the three sections of the course, reflects in any manner a Canadian perspective is nonsense.

Humanities 172b does relate to the general phenomena of York's Americanization.

All three of its course directors have received their higher degrees in the United States.

Since coming to Canada they have obviously made little attempt to integrate a Canadian perspective into their teaching.

## Perhaps problem is lack of Canadian books

Sir:  
Like all publications devoted to a cause, however laudable, EXCALIBUR is prone to exaggerations, omissions, and strange twists in reasoning which would be incomprehensible outside the partisan sphere and certainly do a great deal to weaken your own arguments. A case in point is the collection of informations (and the plural is intentional) on the front page of the Feb. 12 edition.

Judging from the headline, this article is supposed to lead us to the conclusion that York University is being quite methodically Americanized. However, your whole argument seems to hinge upon the factor of a conspicuous absence of Canadian texts in the courses mentioned. Rather than convincing me that a process of overt Americanization is in fact in progress, aside from the notation of certain "U.S. reprints", this article had made me wonder if the real question in this instance is not the American influence, but the lack of any suitable Canadian texts.

The question could be resolved quite easily, by merely introducing the information (singular this time) which you have omitted.

First: Your condemnation of the required reading for the courses is based on a lack of Canadian-written texts. The evidence of Americanization, if any such exists, would perhaps be more discernable if you were to show that an overwhelming number of the required texts have originated in the United States, as opposed to the United Kingdom, France and any other countries from which these texts may, conceivably, have originated. Only then would any charges of Americanization have a firm foundation.

Second: You must take into consideration whether or not this Americanization is an overt and conscious process of the university, or whether it is unavoidable because of a lack of any other authoritative texts.

From my own experience, I know that those "U.S. reprints" you so soundly condemn are the best publications of their kind — readily available, inexpensive, and containing pertinent information which could not otherwise be acquired, unless by a diligent search through all the many periodicals from which these reprinted articles are taken.

Therefore, in order to fully prove your point, you must show that, not only do the American texts form the preponderance of the required texts for all the courses, but also that they occupy these positions in place of Canadian books which are as good or better.

These stipulations need not be made for all of the courses, but I would like to see them for some, especially for Social Science 172, 182 and 183, and Humanities 172, 173 and 178. For these courses, all you need to do is show the country of origin of each one of the required texts, and whether or not there are any authoritative Canadian texts which could be used effectively in each course.

If you then can prove that there is an over-whelming number of American texts taking the place of Canadian ones, then your argument will be a valid one, and worth listening to. Otherwise, you have wasted a great deal of good Canadian newsprint that might have been better spent.

Christine Lundy,  
Glendon I

## Social Science 177 has one Canadian text

Sir:  
Your article on text books, Feb. 12, was great, but I want to make one correction. Social Science 177 does have one book by a Canadian author. The Pornography of Power, by Lionel Rubinoff, was added to the course in October.

Too bad the cover was printed in the United States — but that's the way it goes.

By the way, Prof. Rubinoff was a lecturer in Social Science 177.

T. Angelo,  
Winters.

## Note

EXCALIBUR received many more letters on Americanization than are reprinted here. We regret that we did not have space for them all this week. If your letter did not appear look for it in the next issue.