

editorial

Our right

Our right as Canadian citizens to speak our minds, it turns out, is a fragile right indeed. Thanks to an unholy alliance of the three federal political parties, the individual's right to praise or damn a party during an election campaign has been removed.

This measure, an amendment to the Canada Elections Act passed last fall, calls for permission from the overlords above before publishing any opinions about them.

In doing so, we feel the government has efficiently undermined our "freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication." The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms says it best.

Federal Progressive Conservative Party house leader Eric Neilson was under the mistaken impression that his party is preserving this right when he stated that individuals and groups "still have ample opportunity to make their positions known through the media."

However, it's not the media which in itself makes partisan editorial endorsements of political candidates and parties during elections. Doesn't the *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Globes's* Peter Trueman, and CTV's Bruce Phillips, for instance, do their own ranting and raving about the political prey of their choice?

Why can a private commercial organization, such as a newspaper or television station, champion or condemn political parties while we lowly subjects of the Crown must throw ourselves at the feet of the likes of a Bob Kaplan or a John Gamble and beg for their kind permission to publish a dissenting political opinion?

If no one would dare challenge the right of the media to endorse or denounce a political party during an election campaign, how does the federal government dare question our right to do so?

How dare we let them.



Words from Above.

excalibur

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letters

Club controversy

Editor:

As members of the York campus we would like to express our concern over the obstacles that have been presented to the York El Salvador and Central America Support Committee's (YESC's) application for student club status.

In November 1983, YESC made an application to the Council of the York Student Federation for student club status. Over one month later, and only upon persistent inquiry, a member of YESC was orally informed that its request for club status had been turned down by the CYSF. The reason given was that the club was too political. Given that the information was provided close to exam time, YESC was unable to respond until the new year. At that time club members arranged to meet with CYSF President Chris Summerhayes, to discuss the matter. During this meeting President Summerhayes informed the club members that the decision had been made without enough information on the group activities.

The matter was then referred to the following CYSF council meeting. Upon questioning the activities of YESC it was found that, according to the Council resolution defining "political," YESC could not be excluded from CYSF

membership. Further it was recalled by one member of Council that the resolution defining "political" was three years out of date and therefore no longer effective. Instead of then admitting the club on the existing rules pertaining to membership, it was moved in Council to table application until a suitable definition of "political" was devised. This means that at best two months would have elapsed between the YESC application and the CYSF answer.

Over the last four years hundreds of student have been involved in activities initiated by YESC. YESC has drawn on the rich resources of CERLAC and brought in many speakers from Latin America. In light of these facts we hope that CYSF is aware of the services to York provided by YESC and will recognise this group as a legitimate student club.

J. Douglas Allan
Andrew Murray

Art should stay

Editor:

I would like to respond to your front-page article of the Jan. 12 issue regarding the CSCC's stand against the Central Square sculpture.

Not only is their position "ludicrous," as Summerhayes pointed out, it's

downright scary. At the most congest of times, during class changes, there is never enough traffic in that end of the hallway to justify such accusations that the sculpture acts as an obstruction.

But more than that, Don Nesbitt is acting as censorer for myself and everyone else, it seems. It may be a "monstrosity" to Nesbitt, but it at least provides sorely-needed balance to an otherwise grey, drab area that resembles everything I imagined a fall-out shelter to be. This may be the very point Nesbitt is making, I suppose. Rats have shown to be much more efficient when hustled through mazes that did not have Minnie Mouse posters on the maze walls.

Similarly man may be moved much more efficiently from point A to B if extraneous, superfluous things don't steal and interfere with our consciousness. Consequently the more clinically controlled our environment, the more efficient robots we become.

But where does Nesbitt's zeal for efficiency end? Next thing I know, I'll be reading about how he'll be bringing in traffic cops armed with cattle-prods and german shepherds, so as to ensure smooth flow in the hallways. And as far as a charge of my being paranoid is concerned, to quote the eminent Dr. John Fever, "sometimes paranoia is just sound thinking."

—Alan Melon

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