

EXCALIBUR

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

Axelrod talks about college-CYSF politics

What is there left to say about the 10-year-dream that turned into a nightmare? In light of the impending referendum, perhaps one more thing, one more time. The college system that never was at York, has dissolved into an effective administrative scheme used to divide, delude and rule students.

This university is not and never will be the Murray Ross conception of an alternative to the massive superstructure of the contemporary multiversity. York is the multiversity. The lives of 10,000 plus day students are administered centrally; its crowded, huge lectures in no way approach the idealized educational goal of active student involvement in learning; of creating an intimate, exciting, scholarly environment loved and lauded by professors and students equally.

It should be obvious that the problems which arise from such a centralized monstrosity, which uses colleges as convenient administrative branches only, not as keys to educational excellence, cannot be confronted by fragmented, competing groups of students on college councils and council of the York Student Federation, some of whom are sincerely concerned, some of whom are on ego trips with so much money to throw around, with so little directive common sense.

But students in student politics are dupes—always have been. They are impressed with important administrators who invite them to important (expensive) dinners just to "rap;" they are conned by the same who chuckle to themselves as they tell Winters Council, McLaughlin Council, Founders Council etc. that they are the true custodians of legitimate students' rights—after all they were elected;—and most significantly these students are quietly indoctrinated with the

fact that their revered councils are the guardians of the sacred college system.

What conclusions have college council members derived from this subtle, oft repeated message? Just this: Step on the face of CYSF, Sure it's the central student body, supposedly elected by everyone (not really, just 9 percent normally, 20 percent if it doesn't rain on polling day, but don't forget, we're still dealing in abstract theoretical conceptions of elite groups). Keep the chains on CYSF, because, as the odd administrator has been known to secretly whisper to the president of such and such a college council, the CYSF tends to be run by a group of subversives out to get the college system.

Its a goal made easy in reality for the colleges. For they must say yes before the CYSF can get any money. Some federation. Do provinces have to nod every year before the federal government collects taxes?

The system must have ulterior motives. It does. It works. Now we get down to praxis. It's all a matter of York's bosses ensuring that students spend as much time as possible doing silly things, so that they have no time to do important things. I know. Last year's CYSF spent over three months trying to convince colleges to nod their heads. It was a somewhat humiliating experience, and somewhat amusing. Humiliating to have to submit to a few power mongers whose analysis of problems at York was not very advanced; amusing to see so few think they were so important in ruling over matters so trivial.

That is not to say the CYSF is or has ever been any more of a legitimate representative of student's interests than the college council. CYSF has proven remarkably inept in the past and will likely continue to do so in



SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE FACULTY STRIKES?

"Imagine! An illiterate carpet-sweeper calling me, a Professor of English, a scab!"

the future. But to talk even seriously of dealing with important issues on a broad scale at York, there must be at least, to begin, a strong central student body which constitutionally avoids the absurd practice of having to beg for its own funds from dubious intermediary forces whose goals are not very profound.

No other alternatives exist for students within the present system.

Except maybe one. Dissolve, for the time being, all college councils and the CYSF. Give the administration no patsies, no puppets, no right to pretend even in the abstract that students are represented by all kinds of student councils at York. Then at last, no more infighting would occur. No more time would be wasted. Nothing would get done—like now. But at least the contradiction of a student government with no students governing would be resolved.

One more thing. Hardly anybody cares about or will read this article except Excalibur

who asked me to write it, CYSF maybe, some college council members who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Hardly anybody will vote on Nov. 30 on the referendum, simply an indication that the present system works, which is precisely the proposition with which this article began.

I would say only this. If you care to vote, vote wisely. Give CYSF a life of its own, so it might breathe and through its breath induce some meaningful student activity inside the concrete suffocating walls of York. Perhaps the ultimate result of this seemingly insignificant act will not be realized until my grandchildren's grandchildren attend York (God forbid). But take a step, so that the college system which has died in practice might also die in theory, and cruel memories of it rest in peace... forever.

—PAUL AXELROD
CYSF President 1970-71

Campus Comment

By ALAN RISEN
Excalibur: Do you know about the Nov. 30 student referendum?

Answer: On Nov. 30, Council of the York Student Federation is holding a referendum on a new constitution freeing itself from the power of the colleges.



Rick Harvie
I was reading about it in Excalibur but I am not sure what it is about.



Mickey Rynski
I don't know



Randy Rapson
No, I haven't finished reading this week's paper.



Linda Ahlstrand
No.



Gienek Ksiazkiewica
No.



Rose Floyd
No.



Joel Vale
No I don't.



Mary Benedetti
No.