

editorial

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and, for verification, must bear the writer's address and phone number.

Invalidation, censorship—bad ideas

Fortunately, the recommendation made by Chief Returning Officer Larry Till, that election results for all non-acclaimed positions contested in last April's Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF) elections be declared null and void, was not followed.

Till seems to have based his recommendations on his contention that "the fact that the democratic process was tampered with to *whatever degree* casts serious aspersions on the whole thing."

Nonsense. The task of the Chief Returning Officer can only be to assess whether the democratic process proved strong enough to resist attempted tampering.

There is no doubt that some people attempted to tamper with the elections. While the votes were being counted Allen Schact was caught stealing a presidential ballot and Mark Pearlman was found holding Ombudsperson ballots. (In spite of his efforts the ombudsperson referendum did not pass). Schact appeared to have been destroying votes cast for Maurizio Bevilacqua and Bevilacqua lost the presidency by 502 votes. Could he have stolen enough ballots to bring about this result? Impossible.

A number of ballots were found which obviously did not represent votes legitimately cast, but were stuffed all-in-a-bunch into the box by one or two tamperers. These ballots were *obviously* inauthentic. There was no *obviously* inauthentic and immediately recognized as such.

The Chief Returning Officer ought to have been asking whether the tampering succeeded. By default, this question was left to the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF) who judged (correctly) that the election improprieties were immaterial to the results.

In his report Till also recommends that "some type of quality control system" be imposed on the campus media. He claims that "there have been certain items about the elections carried by the campus media which have been overtly false and/or misleading."

Specifically, Till recommends "that the campus media check any election-related story with the C.R.O. prior to publication, but only to ensure its veracity and authenticity. In the event of a dispute between the C.R.O. and the editors (or whomever) the judgement of the latter should prevail."

Till's recommendation is objectionable both on a practical level and in principle. Now, while this editorial is being penned to paper, it is after three in the morning. Will C.R.O.s be willing to hang around the *Excalibur* office until the wee hours of Thursday morning when we go to press?

A C.R.O. is not a special higher source of veracity, but only a source who should be used along with others for some sorts of stories. A C.R.O. who checks all election-related stories is bound to do more than just give a confirmation or denial of certain facts which he may or may not know about. He is bound to start suggesting which facts should be reported and how. In doing so he will overstep his function and impinge on that of the media. A C.R.O. is a C.R.O., not a newsperson and not a censor.



dare to be a journalist...

Excalibur needs volunteers. If you can write, edit, draw or breathe, drop in to our offices at 111 Central Square.

No condoning Soviet act

When a Korean plane carrying 269 passengers was downed by Soviet fighters a week ago the Soviet government had the gall to at first deny the incident, then not comment on it, and now warn it will act in the same manner in the future.

Why? That's got to be the question on the minds of the relatives of those killed—11 of whom were Canadian and 16 American. Why was it shot down and why were the Soviets not admitting their fatal error?

Six days after the incident the Soviet government finally admitted they were the culprits—news that was not new to the rest of the world. They say they mistook it for a U.S. spy jet on mission, because the commercial airliner flew into Soviet airspace.

The Soviet fighters observed the plane for more than two hours and were close enough to be able to distinguish it between a commercial and reconnaissance plane. They still fired at it. Granted, the U.S. government admits there was a U.S. jet in the vicinity but it had landed about 90 minutes before the Soviets opened fire.

There is no condoning the Soviet action. They are

guilty of killing 269 innocent bystanders and they've got to pay for it.

The Canadian government should be applauded for taking the initiative and showing the Soviets their disapproval. Banning landing rights for 60 days to flights from the Soviet Union may not be severe enough, but it will have an impact. It's appalling that other countries have not followed suit.

Most importantly, in punishing the Soviets, nations must not break off times with them. On the contrary, ties must not break ties with them. On the contrary, ties must be enhanced to discourage further incidents of the kind.

To say the Soviets acted irrationally would be an understatement. If we can attach blame on any one person or body, then it must go not only to the Soviets for their barbaric act but to the U.S. government.

The shooting down of the Korean airliner is an example of the lack of communication between the two "super" powers. There is no room for jostling for supreme power. The two governments must get together and talk peace talks.

excalibur

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