

# Excalibur

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

## 'All reactionaries are paper tigers'

Remember the confrontation in Modes of Reasoning last year? Well, the same situation is developing again this year, only this time it's in the political science 311, a course on the Chinese Communist political system.

About two weeks ago B.M. Frolic, the course director, issued a set of rigid guidelines for the course's operation, claiming students had not taken enough initiative in suggesting a course outline.

Since that time, at least two classes have been disrupted because of the heated debate that has surrounded this issue.

Students were particularly upset about the tone of Frolic's statement which made 5 demands including, "An essay is due in my office S642 Monday Dec. 8, 1969, at 5 p.m. a) It must be typed, b) It should not be less than 5 or more than 10 pages long, c) Its title will be, "What is Maoism", d) It will be worth 15% of your final grade, e) It must be handed in on time."

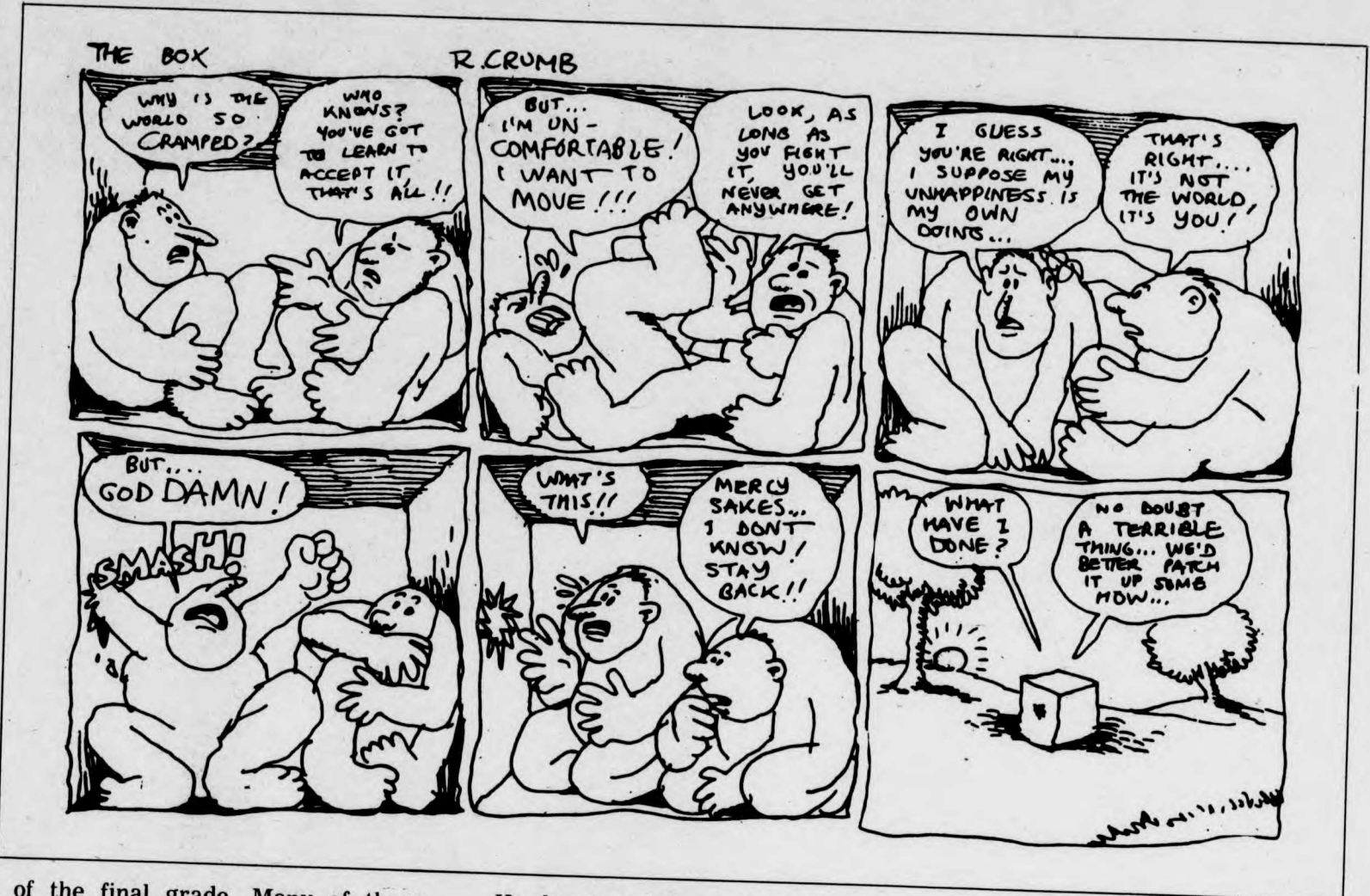
It was then signed sarcastically, "B.M. Frolic, member of York Professors Movement."

Unlike some faculty at York, Mr. Frolic adheres to the old-fashioned mark-oriented approach to learning. While other profs are talking about creating new and more meaningful ways of structuring methods of learning, he issues statements saying "all students who have a B plus or A average can exempt the final exam."

It is unfortunate, indeed, that Mr. Frolic sees fit to perpetuate this competitive approach to learning -- an approach that places the attainment of the almighty grade above all else.

It does not matter if you engage in serious intellectual work. It does not matter if you learn how to interact in a meaningful way with fellow classmates. Just get that grade if you don't want to write the final exams. Despite what Mr. Frolic might say, this is the attitude which results from such structures.

Many students were concerned that exams would count for over one-third



of the final grade. Many of these students have, in the past, had courses where exams were not as heavily emphasized.

For this reason, they felt it was legitimate to ask for substitutions such as research papers, group projects, etc., since other faculty members at York have been very open and often eager to experiment with new ways of learning.

But not our Mr. Frolic. No sir. He still prefers to live in the 19th century and run his classes like the headmaster of an English prep school.

In fact when students even suggested substituting the exams with a more valuable learning experience, he began to scream about a "radical" plot to take over his course.

He denounced those who favoured the substitution as troublemakers and disruptors and told the class his demands to structure the course around exams were "non-negotiable".

At one point he even went so far as to describe CYSF councilman Paul Axelrod as a "juvenile delinquent". When it was suggested he retract his hard-line statement and enter into discussion with the students in an atmosphere free from such intimidation, he said anyone who didn't like his course should get out.

Is this an example of the "rational dialogue" and "participatory democracy" we always hear about? Once again, practice has separated rhetoric from reality.

To top it all off, Frolic went on to defy the students in his class to take the matter to the newspaper, faculty council or anywhere else to solicit support. No amount of pressure would make him change his mind, he said.

Naturally, second and third year students, such as myself, reacted in a very hostile way to such an authoritarian approach to learning. Too many of us have shared better relationships with faculty people to put up with this type of treatment.

And Frolic should not be so assured that his power is invincible. Last year the course director in Modes of Reasoning said exactly the same kinds of things and in the end was forced to eat his words.

And, in fact, some of the students in 311 are veterans of the Modes of Reasoning revolt. In that instance, it took three months of constant struggle to gain students' rights to full participation -- but we won.

And we won because our demands were just. We will not take a backward step now.

On the way out of the class Tuesday someone remarked to me: "It's history repeating itself."

When I asked him what he meant, he explained that he had had Frolic as a teacher before and apparently each year he pulls the same trick.

He gives students a few weeks to "participate" and then says they haven't done enough and takes over the course himself.

Unfortunately for Frolic, some of us are tired of playing this cat and mouse game. It might be well to warn him that the student body of political science 311 is filled with many critical and progressive people, and despite his McCarthy-like accusations, these people are not all "radicals".

They are simply students who will not allow themselves to be treated as children and forced into a state of slave-like subservience to Frolic's "non-negotiable" dictates.

Since Frolic teaches about Communist China I would suggest that he read Mao's "Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong" in which he says:

"All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful."

If students and faculty are to ever attain the kind of social relationships necessary for true intellectual work, such philosophies as those espoused by Frolic will have to be weeded out.

We need a progressive faculty if we are to have a progressive university. And to achieve this, we will have to act. Unfortunately, we cannot depend on another ice age to rid us of the academic dinosaurs now roaming the campus.

— Bob Roth

## Excalibur

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## Mounting casualties

In the last 5,500 years, there have been 14,531 wars, for an average of 3.18 wars a year. In the last 20 years, the frequency has increased to 5.2 a year.

In the First World War, 95 per cent of the fatal casualties were members of the armed forces. In the Second World War, 56 per cent were from the armed forces. In the Korean War, 88 per cent of the fatal casualties were civilians. To date in Vietnam, 91 per cent of the dead have been civilians.