

editorial

Wednesday October 14th, 1992 • Volume 27, Issue 10



Good thing they've made the shuttle bus service more **EFFICIENT!**



Re-learning the Truth about our times

Columbus Day Celebration critics have successfully used a highly publicized party to deliver a mass history lesson.

But challenging official history shouldn't stop there — by following their example, we can apply the 1992 lesson to every part of our education at York.

Turning the 500 year celebration of Columbus' 'discovery of America' into a 500 year celebration of indigenous resistance unearthed a whole 'new' understanding of an old event in the Western world.

Revisionists have taken apart what was once passed off as 'objective' — an uncritical account of white European history, written by white Europeans who made judgements using white European values.

But this is only one example of how a one-sided, masturbatory view becomes Truth. And the questioning that brought to light indigenous histories and criticisms is only one example of how those concepts of Truth can be challenged and changed.

York has a reputation as being among the best universities for moving away from a homogeneously white European and masculine curriculum — but that isn't saying much. We have interdisciplinary programs that boast women's studies, Latin American, Caribbean and African studies, but they still hold a marginal space and are usually the first courses axed when

budgets are tight

Many assumptions in the bulk of mainstream curriculum still go unchallenged.

And many groups are still conspicuously absent from, or mis-represented in, not only history, but in psychology, literature, law and science as well as others. Gay and lesbian histories, for example, have yet to be dealt with in any systematic way.

York's Pan African Law Society has been demanding changes for years, and in February, 30 native law students delivered a list of demands to the deans of Ontario's six law schools, detailing curriculum changes. Adding to these voices this year will be an Indigenous Peoples Committee, whose task it will be to scrutinize curriculum and suggest alternatives. With our education system under such an uncompromising microscope, change is inevitable.

No doubt there will be those who see this as a threat. That's because it is. It's a threat to a one-sided world view that has given white Europeans and their descendants an overblown sense of self importance, and has been used to justify slavery and genocide.

Students should work to better understand these issues. Issues that have little to do with censoring old ideas and everything to do with challenging them while learning new ones.

PM

• The Office of Student Affairs has once again shown that their favourite way of managing our affairs is by poking us in the eye. The office — which the York administration uses to prevent sudden outbreaks of democratic student government — recently published a new edition of its "Survival guide for foreign students." The 68-page pamphlet purports to provide all the information York's 2,000 foreign students need to get by in Downsview.

We were delighted to find a section entitled "Newspapers." This delight was dampened by the contents of the section: after describing Toronto's four dailies in detail, the office lists "York University Publications." We're given detailed descriptions of the *York Bulletin*, the *Glendon Bulletin* and the *York Gazette* — all administration newsletters, none of which are distributed to students. Then, in smaller print, we learn about "Student Newspapers and Newsletters." After learning about the *Atkinsonian* and the *Calumetro*, we're told about something called the *Excilbur*, a "campus-wide tabloid newspaper, issued every Thursday during the academic year and occasionally during the summer."

We welcome all foreign students to pick up an *Excilbur*. It comes out every Wednesday.

York's student-run community radio station received an even more generous plug. Under "FM radio stations," we learn first about Ryerson's student-run station CKLN, then about University of Toronto's CIUT. Then we're told about CJRT and CBC, followed by two commercial rock stations, two easy listening stations and CKO 99.1, which stopped transmitting about three years ago. And finally, second last on the list, it arrives: CHRY 105.5 "York University radio, multi-cultural, French."

We urge everyone to tune into York's excellent FM station, at 105.5 on the dial. Its programming is in English.

• We always enjoy reading the *York Gazette*, the monthly newsletter put out by the university's department of communications. The *Gazette's* editors really outdid themselves last month, though. They devoted two full pages — complete with eight photos — to the Sept. 14 grand opening of Vari Hall.

If you read the article, you'd never know that the event was disrupted almost from the beginning by scores of protesting students. The photos would make you think that the visiting dignitaries outnumbered the beer-guzzling protesters (they didn't).

Congratulations on a fine editing job, *Gazette*.

student press conference

Fri. Oct. 23 to Sun. Oct. 25

Canadian University Press Conference hosted by *The Charlatan* (Carleton University) and *The Fulcrum* (University of Ottawa)

Seminars will include:

- Introduction to newswriting
- Introduction to newspaper design
 - Feature writing
- Developing research skills
- Arts and Sports writing
 - Conflict resolution
 - Accessibility Issues

Contact John or Pat at 736-5239 for more info

A sign-up sheet has been posted in the *Excil* office

excilbur

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excalendar

Wednesday, October 14

Design seminar 12:30 pm

Thursday, October 15

Headline writing seminar 12 pm

Staff meeting 5 pm

(Everyone is welcome)

Piece of mind:

"We have excellent facilities for a very small high school...I think the physical education facilities we have for students are disgraceful." — *York varsity basketball coach Bob Bain.*