

Excalibur

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

Council elections: Axelrod and Morinis can do the job

This year's flood of presidential and vice-presidential candidates for positions on the Council of the York Student Federation may have left many students in the dark as to how to differentiate between their seemingly similar platforms at the polls this Tuesday.

Most of the candidates have taken up the obvious issues of poor food, high bookstore prices, the need for a birth control centre, support of the day care centre and the need to halt the pollution from the York smokestack. These issues are all extremely valid and whoever gets elected on Tuesday must deal with them.

But since everyone is promising to deal with these issues the dilemma remains: How does one choose?

It appears that students will have to make their decision on the basis of how the candidates are handling the major issues of Americanization and CYSF involvement in academic affairs. Also needed, however, is a close examination of the candidates' attitudes towards student government itself.

Americanization of York

Most of the candidates have given a casual mention to this issue and have promised to look into it with the end in mind of getting more Canadian content into courses.

However, we feel that most candidates took up the issue simply because of the coverage given to it recently by EXCALIBUR and for this reason it is almost certain that their analyses of the situation lacks any depth.

The possible exception to this is **Paul Axelrod**. Axelrod has been aware of the Americanization problem since the beginning of the year through his participation with students in Social Science 372, a course on the viability of the Canadian state. Here, students have been challenging the content of the course and its failure to deal with the problem of U.S. domination.

In a recent leaflet, Axelrod and his vice-presidential running mate **Alan Morinis** not only expressed the need for Canadian courses and more Canadian research, but also showed a great deal of insight when they defined how we must pick faculty in the future.

"Being a Canadian should not guarantee a professor a job, but faculty members must be knowledgeable in terms of Canadian content."

In other words, we should not look, necessarily, at a person's citizenship to decide whether or not he is qualified to teach, but rather on his commitment to Canada and his desire to work on Canadian problems and do needed Canadian-oriented research.

We feel this emphasis on content, and not just nationality, is a fundamental principle in dealing with the Americanization question.

In addition, Axelrod and Morinis counter the argument that there are not enough Canadians by suggesting that sterile 'academic' qualifications need not be the only criteria we use in hiring faculty.

"Life experience," they say, is an equally important factor in determining if a person has good faculty potential.

They give as an example Michel Chartrand, active in the Con-

federation of National Trade Unions in Quebec, an avid proponent of Quebec independence and a constant opponent of authoritarianism in the province since the days of Maurice Duplessis.

The first-hand accounts he could give of political repression in Quebec during the last decade would, no doubt, stimulate any student interested in the problems of that province.

CYSF in academic affairs

Many of the candidates are supporting course unions. There is nothing unique in that policy, itself, which was developed two years ago.

But here again Axelrod and Morinis have taken a unique approach to the problem of helping students with course difficulties.

Since many students are not in course unions and since many courses do not even have unions, it is necessary, they say in one leaflet, to "delve right into the classroom situation if students need assistance." They give an example of where this could, and should, have been done this year — in Natural Science 176.

"Over half the class signed a petition complaining that the course was not relevant to society. After being given a ride on the bureaucratic merry-go-round, the students, whose petition was labelled by the professor as 'insignificant' and whom themselves were labelled by the professor as simply having 'personal problems,' were ignored and ridiculed because nobody was there to help."

Axelrod, himself, has been involved in grass roots work. He was one of the people involved in the conflict in political science 311, a course on Communist China. In this instance, after a long battle, students were allowed to set up their own seminar and given 50 per cent of the power in determining their final grades.

In this regard, there can be no doubt that Axelrod, having himself felt the frustrations and anxieties of attempting a course change, will be able to identify on a personal basis with other students who are bound to run into the same problems in the year to come.

Student government

The role that student government will play in the months to follow will depend a great deal on people's choices for president and vice-president.

On this question the difference between Axelrod/Morinis and the other candidates is quite apparent.

David Beatty, for example, appears to be completely unaware of the dynamics of decision-making at this campus. In his platform he declares: "Give the senate final say in all academic affairs at the university."

The senate is already recognized as the chief decision-making body on campus regarding academic matters. Not even the board of governors challenges this function. In fact the York University Act (1965) states quite clearly that "the senate is responsible for the academic policy of the university."

Also, his suggestion that student representation on senate be increased "to a total of 20-25 per cent" makes us wonder exactly what he is up to. How will that alter student decision-making power?

If he had asked for 50 per cent representation we could see some logic in it, but even then we would ask what difference does it make to have even 50 per cent representation if the reps are not responsible to the student body? And since no council has yet put a concerted effort into determining what students' interests are, putting more students on committees is premature.

In fact, when we look at the present trend in universities — as exemplified by the U of T report on university government — we find that the old senate/ board system is on its way out and the idea of a single governing body of students, faculty and members of the community is now under consideration.

Therefore, to concentrate on looking towards the senate as the chief decision-making body of the future is, in fact, a step backwards.

Again, only Axelrod and Morinis have grasped this very important concept of changing the existing structures rather than supporting them with more student representation.

In their platform, they suggest the council get out of committee work temporarily until "council defines precisely what student interests are at York, and then recommend formation of structures in which students have real decision-making powers."

It is perhaps this vision and imagination that could make the difference next year between a progressive council and a mediocre one since, unfortunately, the other candidates are coming up with the same old unimaginative answers for changing CYSF.

Alan Shefman, vice-presidential candidate, for instance, is recommending "that the president of each constituent member (or a person appointed by the constituent member) become a full voting member of the CYSF" and "that there be one less elected representative from each constituent member."

This desire by Shefman to trade one elected rep for an appointed rep is too incredible for words. Students are already too detached from the council without placing on it appointed reps who would not be directly responsible to the student body.

Presidential candidate George Orr, on the other hand, seems to feel that there are no real power structures at York, no conflicting interests and that all we need is a full-time president to solve all our problems.

His pronouncement that "I am the only one who will take time necessary to see that proper solutions are reached," is not that reassuring considering that it was not a lack of manpower that hindered this year's council, but rather an absence of an analysis about this university and a general lack of direction.

We feel the impression that Orr is giving us that he, himself, is the solution to York's problems. As one of his posters put it "York needs a full-time president. There is no other choice. It's time we grew up. It's now or never. George B. Orr for President of CYSF." (Incidentally, he says he will take the job for "less than \$2,500.")

Cooperation necessary

This brings up another point about Axelrod and Morinis. They realize that the day of the individualist politician is over and that if we are every going to have a progressive council it will have to be a cooperative effort.

For this reason they have solicited and received support for their platform from five college rep candidates: Winters — **Howard Vernon and Joe Polonsky**; Vanier — **John Laskin** (acclaimed); McLaughlin — **Elliot Strom** (acclaimed); Founders — **Ken Hundert** (acclaimed).

Axelrod was a Vanier rep on the 1969-70 CYSF. He knows its pitfalls and during his term of office he was a consistent critic of the council's refusal to deal with vital student issues.

Those of us who have attended central student council meetings over the last two or three years would have to agree with Axelrod and Morinis that a good core of people with some sort of common analysis are needed to give a council direction. Otherwise we end up with a group of unrelated individuals who spend so much time arguing with each other about what to do, that they remain inactive for most of the year.

And although Axelrod, Morinis and their supporters have been together only two short weeks, they show great promise for becoming that core, if students deem it wise to vote them all in.

In this respect we must end on a sad note, for unlike other candidates, there are those people running from the York Green Committee who are not informing students of their affiliation.

Before their rejection in the McLaughlin College elections, the Green Committee announced its intention to run a slate in the CYSF elections. Following that defeat they exhibited a rather sudden change of heart and decided to run as 'concerned individuals' without letting the student body know they were members/supporters of the Green Committee.

The following are members or supporters of the Green Committee that we know are running.

President — **David Beatty**; McLaughlin reps — **Mike Grosney** and **Tim Delaney**; Vanier rep — **A.R. Gouge** (acclaimed); Founders rep — **Janice McCall** (acclaimed); Winters rep — **James Bull**.

Excalibur

January 29, 1970

editor-in-chief
managing editor
assistant editor
advertising
secretary

bob waller
john king
bob roth
rolly stroeter
jackie stroeter

editorial phone: 635-3201, 3202
advertising phone: 635-3800

excalibur, founded in 1966, is the student weekly of york university and is independent politically. opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. excalibur is a member of canadian university press and liberation news service. printed at newswest, excalibur circulates to over 17,000 people. office: central square (southeast corner) behind the ministry of love, york university, downsvew, ontario.