

**Gird thy loins!**

# Student guide abuses power, wastes money

By OAKLAND ROSS

Self-righteous indignation brews in the offices of the York student council. Rumours of revolution scurry across the plains of Downsvew. The trembling barrels of machine guns glisten in the sun on the extreme left. . .

Man the lifeboats! Sound the alarm! Gird thy loins!

The 1976-76 York University student handbook is being distributed this week. And it contains a few surprises.

It's awful. It's offensive. It's scary.

It's packed with the most confused, bumbling, circular, opportunistic revolutionary gobbledegook imaginable. It's an abuse of power, a waste of time and money.

It gives one pause.

The Council of the York Student Federation, this year dominated by the United Left Slate, delegated Paul Kellogg (a ULS member and CYSF rep from Founders) to edit the handbook. It's a big job and, in many ways, Kellogg is to be commended. The design, layout, graphics and photography are all superb. York students would have been better served, however, if only Kellogg had done a little more editing and a lot less proselytizing.

Kellogg's first innovation was to change the handbook's name from Manus to Take-it. Not bad. Take-it is a slick, catchy name. It reeks a little of Madison Avenue but, then, what doesn't?

**DOWNRIGHT DIZZYING**

However, Kellogg's reasons for the name change (which he outlines in his introduction) are downright dizzying. He writes:

"Manus is a meaningless foreign collection of letters with absolutely no significance for the average reader. To unearth its significance, an esoteric performance in scholasticism is required, something I never bothered to do.

"It has something to do with Latin and something to do with 'hand', hence, perhaps its association with the handbook. But punning in classical languages was never a popular past-time even among Latin scholars, let alone the community at large. Its attachment to our handbook from that standpoint is artificial and meaningless."

Provincial, arrogant and dumb. The York handbook is not the pick of the pops. It is (or always used to be) a thoughtful guide to a university. What's wrong with "foreign collections of letters"? Millions of people all over the world use them everyday. People get university degrees in them, even at York.

**MANUS**

According to last year's handbook, Manus "translates from the Latin as hand, corps, company, trunk (as in elephant), touch (as in art), handiwork, handwriting, force or valour (as in warfare), hand to hand fighting, power."

Now that's what I call an "esoteric performance in scholasticism". But, performances in scholasticism (esoteric or otherwise) ain't got no place in a university. After all, York is a modern institution.

So, what we've got is Take-it. Kellogg describes the name as "a call to the barricades, a call to the York community to organize,

mobilize and defend its rights."

**CALL TO ARMS**

Kellogg bases this call to the "barricades" on a "simple program of demands; that universities are important; that the cutbacks policy of the bureaucrats in Queen's Park as carried out by the hatchetmen in the Ross Building threatens the future of the universities; that the students, faculty and staff — the people who are the university, the people without whom it is nothing — must organize and mobilize to defend their rights threatened by the ninth-floor mildew of the Board of Governors."

Ah, the days of Youth. Autumn afternoons spent cavorting and carrying signs with friends in Queen's Park. Those cosy November evenings when we snuggled together in front of a warm, crackling computer at Sir George William U. Marching, chanting, falling in love.

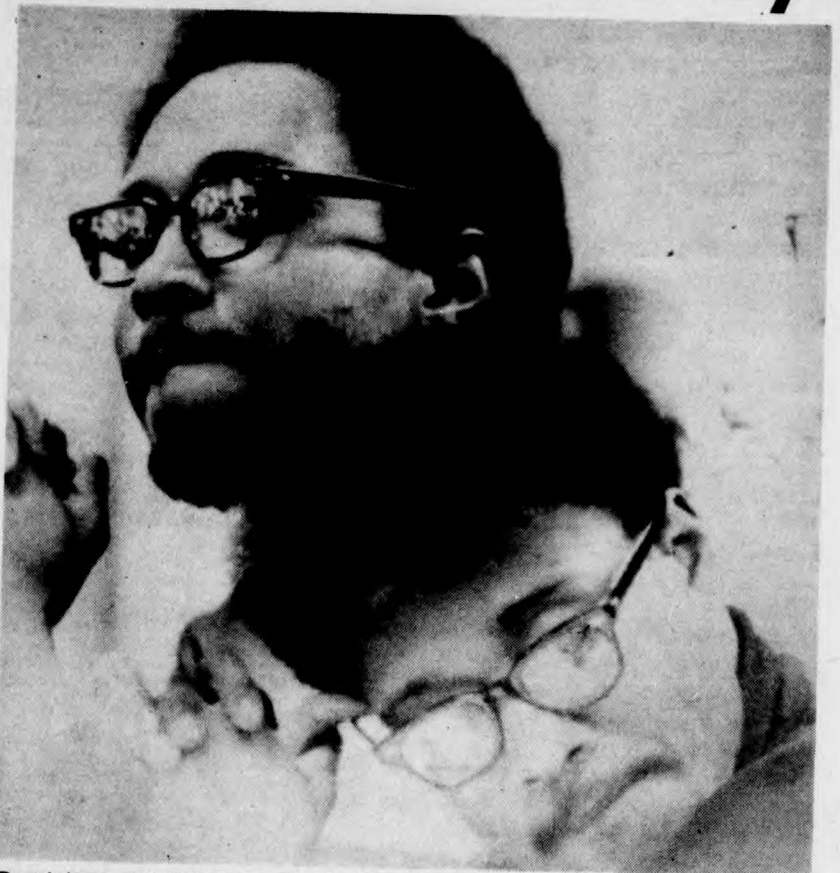
Thanks to the magic of Take-it, those days are back again. And they're welcome back. But not in the student handbook.

**PRETENSE**

In fact, Take-it only pretends to be a handbook for York students. It's really a collection of revolutionary flyers — the kind you get thrust upon you at every street-corner as you walk along Bloor St. near St. George.

If only their writers would calm down a little, these flyers might make a lot of sense. But as long as they ooze that eat-em-alive, power-to-us-madmen claptrap — well, the socialist solution just won't work.

Take-it doesn't make much sense. What has Rosie Douglas



Dominican revolutionary Rosie Douglas ponders his fate. (Photo from page four of Take-it.)

(Dominican revolutionary, soon to be deported from Canada) got to do with York? Not much. But the United Left Slate thinks that he should have a lot to do with York, so there he is: in a triple-image photo filling most of page four. It's a nice photo. But should the CYSF be turning out a handbook, at students' expense, that tells us less about York than it does about the Council's pet causes? Should Take-it have been published by the ULS for the ULS or by the CYSF for the York community?

The handbook includes a socialist view of the cutbacks in university funding in Ontario, a socialist history of York, a socialist study of York's power structure, as well as articles (each with a socialist slant) on women, Dr. Morgentaler, York students and politics, York community organizations and the relationship of the university with the outside world.

**MEDIA COLLECTIVE**

Most of these articles were written by members of the Media Collective which, in the handbook, is described as a group of students "attempting to develop, coordinate and produce media projects . . . primarily by covering various news and cultural events in terms of a socialist analysis of society."

One detects a certain political bias here. Editor Kellogg makes no attempt to mask that bias. In the introduction, he writes:

"A common approach to journalism is to call for 'objectivity', to call for apolitical detachment. The adage goes that a journalist should concern himself with the dry recording of the facts and not allow the intrusion of any political ideology. That was the approach of last year's handbook and that is

the approach we reject."

Straight-thinking, boys. It's all very well to throw objectivity (or the pretense to objectivity) to the wind. It's certainly fashionable. But that doesn't mean we should do away with balance and intelligence as well.

In a plea for the release of Dr. Morgentaler (pp. 15-16), the writer raises his rhetoric and cries: "Only in numbers will our voice be heard."

Whose voice is that? The voice of women? Of York students? Of those in favour of abortion? Of those against?

None of the above. It simply refers to whomever the publishers decide it should.

**DAYS OF YORE**

The handbook swoons with nostalgia for the good old days of student unrest and getting one's thing together. The Artistic Woodwork strike of 1973, York's one big brush with campus activism, is proudly trotted out as proof of York's radical history.

Unfortunately, the photograph accompanying that article (purporting to show a York student being arrested at the strike) is actually a photograph of someone who is not a York student being arrested at the strike. This information is provided by Peter Hsu; he took the photo.

When the handbook finally gets down to providing "straight" information (beginning on page 28), it's thorough. What to do, where to do it, who's available, how to solve it, clubs, organizations, services. Some of the information, though, is of questionable propriety: for example, advice on how to collect unemployment insurance or welfare while attending school.

There are guides to bookstores, libraries, travel, entertainment. You have a right to expect this; you paid for it; it's here; that's good.

But what of the rest of the handbook?

In the introduction, Kellogg doffs his denim cap and cries: "In short, we are saying that the real people on this campus can and must control their own lives, using a real democracy, bowing to no imposed, artificial authority."

That's fine, so long as it isn't solely the responsibility of the CYSF to determine who is "real" and who isn't.

In his final remarks, Kellogg has the confused temerity to suggest that the university administration was remiss in not contributing to his salary.

Disregarding the fact that you already have — would you?



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