

Editorial

Endemic woes of student government Blink's challenge

Student government at York is at a crossroads. The future of the Council of the York Student Federation (CYSF) hinges on the findings of the Guelph Provost and the review of the college system. York needs a CYSF president who is aware of the fundamental structural flaws of the University's student government, has a clear idea of the changes that need to be made, and will forcibly set out to accomplish these goals.

Sadly, neither Gerard Blink nor Vicky Fusca seem to recognize the overriding importance of these two reviews beyond speaking in generalities. Both favor more communication with the colleges about the New Model, in effect saying 'Let's look at it again,' which will take up even more time—a luxury CYSF can no longer afford.

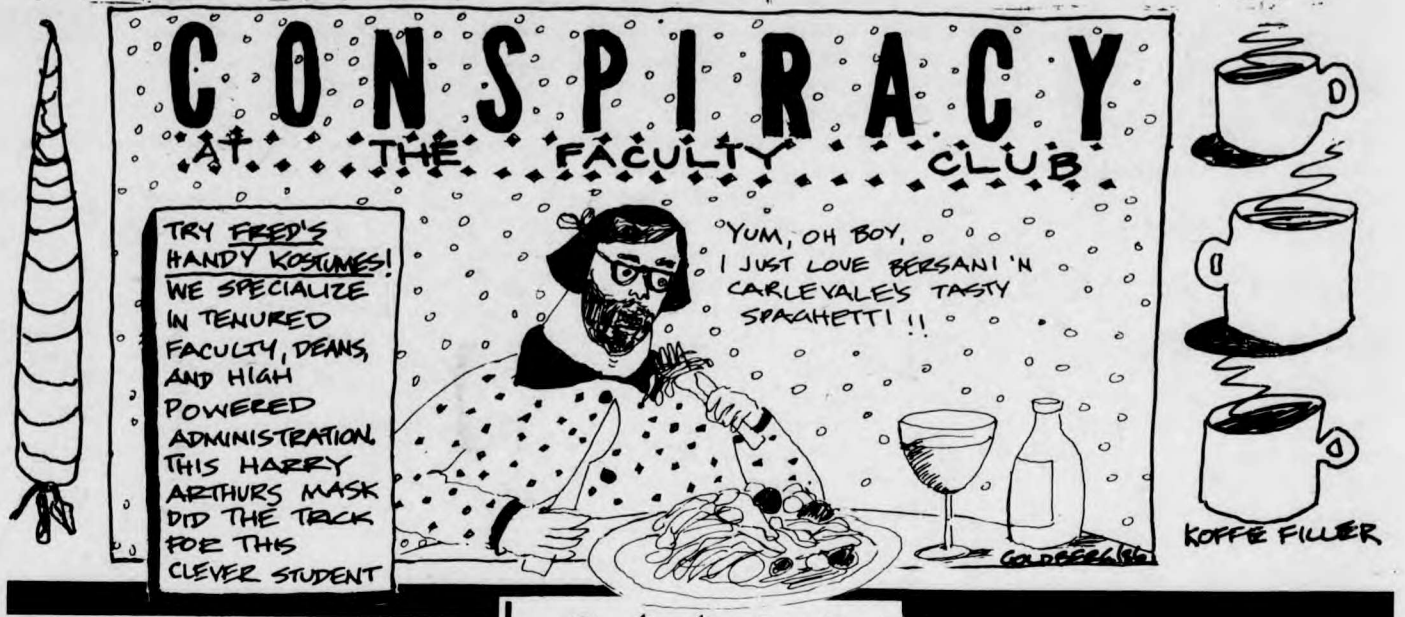
This laborious, time-consuming task, however, has already been done—by Reya Ali, of all people, who has been vilified for his "top-heavy" approach to governing. Ali has consulted with the major political figures in the Colleges and composed numerous drafts of the New Model in the past year to address concerns raised by them.

Yet the New Model remains just a proposal due, in large part, to the Colleges' laziness. Most of the Colleges want the New Model implemented but cannot even get their representatives to show up at CYSF meetings. It is ironic that the Colleges may be primarily responsible for their own demise by letting a proposal that could save their lives fall by the wayside because of sheer neglect.

Although the impression gleaned from the interviews *Excalibur* held with the presidential candidates was that neither person truly appreciated the severity of the problems facing student government, we do feel that Gerard Blink is the more capable of the two.

Blink seems to have a good grasp on a wide range of issues, showing that he has done his homework. His knowledge of the college system from his stint as Vice-President of Founders College and of the provincial scene for students will be of great benefit to him as President. As well, an era of harmonious relations with the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) may very likely be ushered in with Blink's election which will help York get more out of its \$30,000 annual commitment (Blink led the successful campaign to keep York in OFS).

Blink is the better candidate for CYSF President. However, if he hopes to be effective he has to take this year's lesson to heart: that the relationship between a central government and a college system is inherently contradictory.



Letters

'Hippie musicians and child killers'

Editor:

Just a few comments on the "Anti-Apartheid" carnival at York a few weeks ago.

First of all I would like to thank David Himbara et al for a week full of poetry reading, hippie musicians and other assorted treats.

Secondly, might I be so humble as to suggest that the week-end activists and professional radicals who take part in such "events", next year have an "anti-communist" week, only if it doesn't offend their Friends in the ANC of course [sic]. In it they could protest the shooting down of a civilian airliner, the imprisonment of free thinking individuals, the domination and dehumanization of 1.5 billion people, the deaths of thousands of Afghan Freedom Fighters, the killing of millions by the Soviet government and if this isn't enough I'm sure there are many more abuses to be found.

—B. Chatterton

P.S. How many children has the ANC killed this week Mr. Himbara?

Babb "not attacking negroes": Pengelly

Editor:

Oh dear, more letters trying to fight apartheid by censoring what Canadians may read or hear.

My interest is more in learning for myself what is being said and making up my own mind than on letting the government decide what I may hear. Because of this I am perhaps less aware of the details of the law on hate literature than I should be. My example should be taken as an indication of a threat to our freedom rather than as specific details of the law.

It is my understanding that a person can be charged under the hate literature laws for promoting hatred against people on a racial or national basis (among others). Those who speak against apartheid are preaching hatred against such a group, white South Africans. This has led to violence in the form of a physical assault against the South African ambassador. Therefore opponents of apartheid should be charged under the hate literature laws. The South African ambassador is defending apartheid and not attacking negroes. He should be allowed to speak.

I am not saying that this is the case but that it is a case that can be made given the censorship and hate literature laws. Be careful when you demand censorship, you cannot know where it will end.

David Pengelly

English calls for "peaceful change" in South Africa

Editor:

I applaud the recent decision of the Pension Fund Board of Trustees of York's Board of Governors to delay the decision to divest York's pension fund of some \$9 million in South African-linked

investments. This decision—to investigate the legal implications of such a move before going ahead with divestment—is a reassuring sign that Mr. E. Kernaghan and his colleagues are maintaining an even-handed and logical approach to an extremely problematic issue. The function and duty of the Pension Trustees is to ensure that the line between logical and rational decision-making does not become eroded by the often emotional and sometimes hysterical vitriol put forth by well-meaning York divestment supporters. These supporters tend to confuse reality with the often emotion-laden presentation of the divestment issue seen in biased and opinionated media outlets including *Excalibur*.

It is clear that the three motions passed by the Pension Trustees, following their January 22 meeting, indicates the Board's abhorrence to the system of apartheid. Let us not allow the bitter disappointment at this new delay to cloud the process of logical and rational thinking that is so essential in efforts to dismantle an evil and discriminatory system.

I am deeply disturbed by a column in the March 13 issue of *Excalibur* in which Gary Hackenbeck attacked the Board's decision. Personal vituperation is no match for political and economic analysis, but there is far more of the former than the latter in the diatribes of Gary Hackenbeck. To rant on about a "betrayal of trust," to brand this delay of decision-making "outrageous" and "criminal" and to suggest the resignation of this distinguished Board who have served York's Pension Fund so successfully and skillfully in the past, smacks of personal vitriol and rhetorical hyperbole.

Mr. Hackenbeck's suggestion that "there might be a full-scale revolution in South Africa" sadly identifies him as a victim of his own role in media distortion and ludicrous soothsaying that has no basis in reality. I suggest that if Mr. Hackenbeck wishes his admirable efforts and involvement in the anti-apartheid and pro-divestment movements to maintain a shred of credibility, he should take the trouble to appraise himself of the enormous strength of the Botha regime's military might and willingness to use this lethal power—as demonstrated—before he dangles the prospect of revolution as a rationale for divestment. Militarily the South African regime has the power and ability to maintain the status quo indefinitely. This is a fact we must confront and adapt to.

"South African slave labour" might better be termed "voluntary African slave labour" for an enormous number of migrant workers from sovereign African nations including Zimbabwe, Angola, Botswana and Mozambique voluntarily flock to South Africa in pursuit of work they are unable to find in their own countries.

Grow up Mr Hackenbeck. Stop wallowing in the deluded fantasy that the white minority government are tottering on the brink of collapse. The sooner you and your colleagues recognize and adapt to the realities of the situation within South Africa and convert your childish and righteous indignation to rational and viable suggestions, the more effective will be the efforts of all concerned and involved students to affect peaceful change and the dismantling of the inhuman system of apartheid in South Africa.

By the way Mr. Hackenbeck, De Beers is a chain of Canadian-owned furniture stores and have no mining interests. Perhaps you were referring to De Beers? Tsk tsk Mr. Hackenbeck.

Hamilton English

Christie letter "motivated by blackmail": Golden

I am deeply concerned over the March 16 letter to the editor by John Christie et al. While I am concerned about Mr. Christie's twisted version of that meeting and while I am also concerned about the letter's glaring factual and substantive errors, I am most concerned about the motive behind the writing of the letter.

If this letter was written because of the authors' grave concern over the delay in the passing of the new proposed CYSF constitution, I would find it credible. But because the letter was motivated by blackmail, it is more pathetic than effective.

Back in the fall, both Mr. Christie and I ran for the position of Chief Returning Officer. Just before the vote we agreed that the winner would hire the loser as the assistant CRO. While it was I who won that vote, certain facts then came to light that made it impossible for me to keep my word.

Because it is the essence of the assistant CRO's job to remain impartial I could not hire Mr. Christie despite my promise. I discovered that Mr. Christie was actively working for the "YES" campaign, helping out his girlfriend, Sandra Antoniani (a co-author of last week's letter), who was running the "YES" organization. It was also brought to my attention by people from both campaigns that Mr. Christie had actively campaigned against OFS during his unsuccessful presidential bid last year.

With such bias so well documented I found it totally inappropriate to appoint Mr. Christie to an impartial position. When Mr. Christie discovered my intent he was upset. I offered to talk to him about it but he refused. He became quite belligerent and then threatened me twice.

First he told me that if I did not give him the job, I'd "be sorry." Then he told me that if I did not hire him, notwithstanding his bias on the issue, he said he would "do everything I can to make sure you lose your job" as both CRO and as Speaker of Council. I did not heed his threats as it is not my practice to bend to blackmail.

I find it sad when someone who once asked the students for their vote for his as a student leader has now resorted to blackmail. I am not bothered by legitimate criticism. I am bothered by criticism that it is motivated by petty anger. If Mr. Christie was now the assistant CRO I wonder whether last week's letter would ever have been written?

If Mr. Christie would like to mount a genuine criticism of my performance in either of my capacities I would be most pleased to respond in the appropriate forum. I only hope that if such criticism ever comes it is motivated by a genuine concern for the students of this university and not by a bad case of sour grapes.

Marshall Golden
Speaker, CYSF

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