

EDITORIAL

This Monday morning, the big Canuck himself — Brian Mulroney — came to York to smile, to laugh, to wave and to bolster his popularity. Of course, in between these exertions, he addressed a small group of business students and faculty in Administrative Studies.

The problem, however, in speaking only to 75 people (and his accustomed media entourage) was that he slighted many of the uninvited people outside the small basement room: hundreds of York students to be exact.

The PM had a private meeting with 20 pre-selected student leaders up in the fourth floor, even before he came down to address the media and the 75 lottery-winning students in the larger room downstairs.

Consider the whole scenario as an exercise in privilege: the barricades kept the protesters out and the MBA or MEDIA badges allowed the rest of us in.

In a nutshell, "elitism." Sure, the E-word isn't very nice if you don't belong to the "club." But if you are one of the privileged, it's hard to see what all the commotion is about. Right? Wrong.

The reason the excluded students became inflamed is simple: We rarely have the opportunity to **directly** address the PM on matters that concern us. So when he steps into our parlour, it's only common courtesy that we take the chance to unwind, have a drink, maybe relive old times, and shake his hand.

For his part, Mulroney jokingly dismissed the demonstrators as a trifle annoyance to which he has become accustomed.

The nice, quiet meeting that originated a few weeks ago from the Prime Minister's Office had changed completely by the time Mulroney actually arrived — a large and vocal student demonstration organized itself virtually overnight to receive him.

What began as rumor erupted into a large scale media blitz as the student press, student government and a significant cross-section of the student body mobilized and blew the whistle on what was to be a very low-key promotional affair.

Protestors on Monday made their point with an assault on Mulroney using macaroni and balls of crumpled paper as vicious projectiles.

Poor Brian. The guy is already on record as the most unpopular prime minister and yet people pelt him with food. Now that's gotta be depressing to the soul.

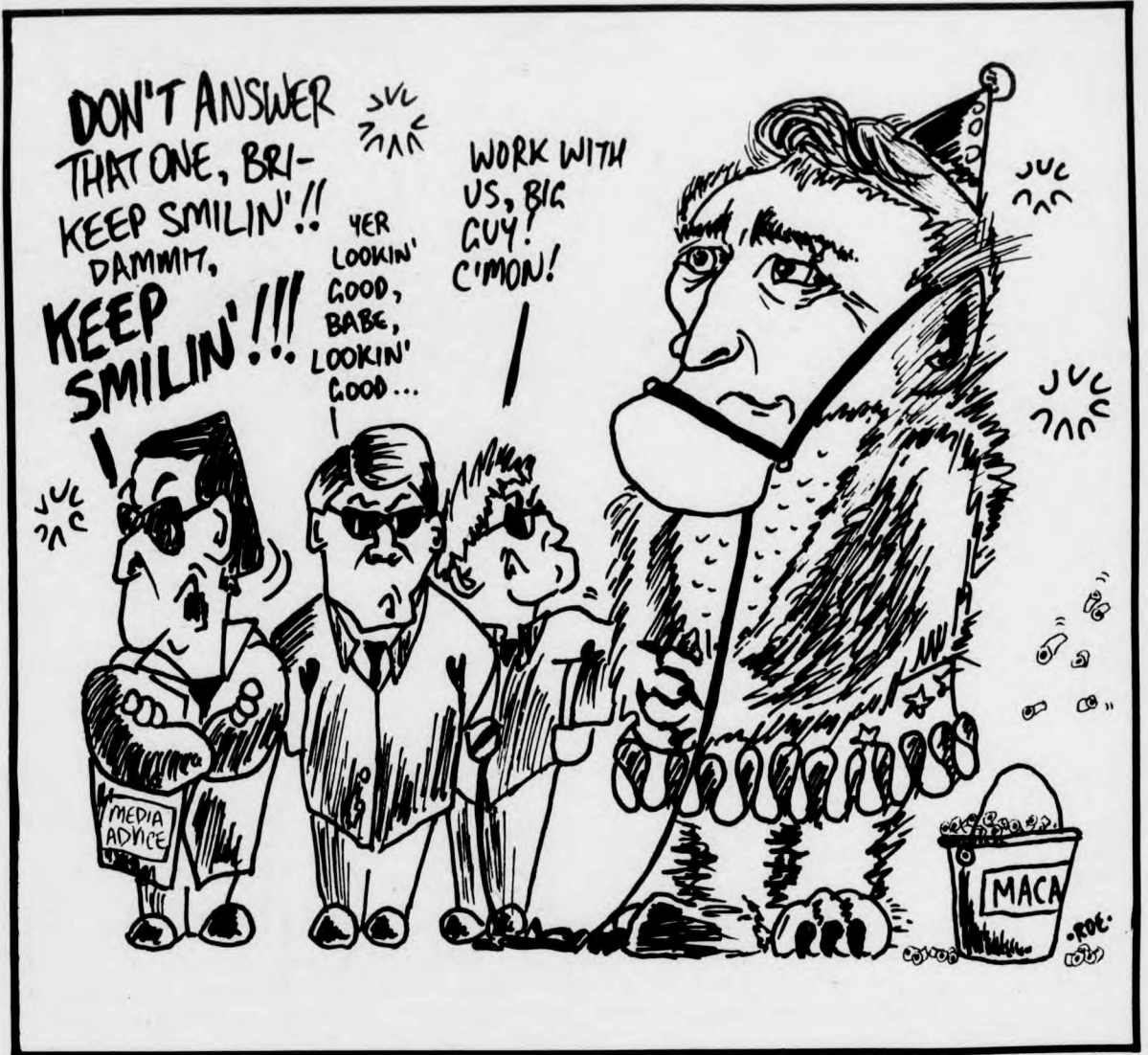
The York student protest stole the headlines on three news broadcasts that same evening. CBC, CTV and Global all ran the demonstration as their lead stories with newspapers also giving the event prominent coverage.

Perhaps, the PM gets too much media coverage. Every time he steps out of his limo, he gets all the free publicity he wants. All he has to do is mold this attention into a format conducive to his own needs and he's off again.

Media has become a three-ring carnival, pandering to sensational images, complete with news anchors substituting as ringleaders.

Although, accessibility to post-secondary education was a concrete and valid message, it was, nevertheless, buried underneath the ubiquitous 10-second soundbite.

The whole affair was another example of the media circus focusing on the main attraction. Big Brian under the spotlights and the flash of cameras, gesturing back and forth, as if he were some kind of dancing-bear.



LETTERS

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of *Excalibur* staff or directors. However, letters judged to be racist, sexist or libellous by the editor will be refused. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

Another response to Kutty piece

To the editor,

It probably won't surprise Faisal Kutty that there are "free-thinking and open minded individuals" that reject the assertions of his October 24 opinion piece.

In his haphazard condemnation of the West and Israel, Faisal enlightens us with his own warped perspective of the Middle East conflict, and unwittingly illuminates some hypocrisies and double standards of his own.

For instance, Faisal asserts that world condemnation of Saddam Hussein is justified, yet twice nullifies the Iraq-Kuwait border as an arbitrary product of colonialism. So... Is Saddam justified in invading Kuwait, Faisal? The question that arises in the minds of some of us free thinkers is, "if he can do this to his own brothers, what does he have in store for Israel?"

Faisal has conveniently forgotten that those arbitrary British boundaries not only created divisions between Iraq and Kuwait but in fact created the whole country of Iraq, not to mention Jordan and Palestine. It may surprise Faisal that the menace of colonialism was only eradicated from Palestine through the triumph of Zionism, the National Liberation Movement. And what of Faisal's twice mentioned "illegal occupation of Palestine?" With this venomous terminology, Faisal has joined with Iraq, Syria and the PLO in categorically

rejecting Israel's right to exist.

Now, what about that atrocious UN double standard? If Kutty's article was our sole source of news, we'd all be convinced that the UN was in reality the Israel fan club. Nothing could be further from the truth.

UN animosity towards Israel culminated fifteen years ago with the infamous resolution equating Zionism with racism. Since then, a multitude of resolutions and declarations have been adopted to support those forces that seek Israel's demise. Some go a step further, to deny Israel the right of legitimate self-defence. (A state that is not allowed to defend itself, is not permitted to exist, period.)

In recent days, forces of the Syrian Republic massacred 700 Christian Arabs and 80 soldiers in Beirut, after their unconditional surrender to occupation troops. Was there a UN condemnation? Was there a special session? Does anybody care? Obviously not.

When Arab Syria suppressed dissent by eliminating 20,000 of its own people in the town of Hama, was there a public outcry? Where was Faisal Kutty then?

And what of our beloved Saddam? When he belatedly with over 5,000 Iraqi Kurds and their drive for independence with poison gas, the UN was as quiet as a mouse.

Double standard? I rest my case. Barbaric excesses by oil-rich Arab states and their satellites are ignored, while Israel's right to defend herself is revoked.

Of course, all of this is well-known to Mr. Kutty. His aim in writing such an article, to castigate Israel behind a wall of anti-Western rhetoric, should be clear to the reader.

Faisal is absolutely correct in criticizing world powers for their double-standards. Unfortunately, the hypocrisy of his article is altogether his own.

Aryeh Snitman

Address local issues -reader

To the editor,

It's good to see *Excalibur* available in the community. This is a step in the right direction.

However, if *Excalibur* is to be billed as a Community newspaper, articles should be written about community issues. These include drugs, crime, affordable housing, funding for the York Youth Connection Day camp (sponsored by York University), race and multicultural issues, policing in the community, lack of space for community agencies, social assistance review, unemployment, refugee and immigrant issues, access to trades and professions by newcomers... and much, much more.

All of these issues should be of interest to university students as well, as they will have to live with the rest of us once they graduate.

I would be happy to provide information and contacts to other agencies if you are interested. Perhaps we could even contribute.

Sincerely
Susan Nwosu
Community resident
and York grad

ATTENTION SHOPPERS: There will be no staff meeting today, so you can just go home.

EXCALIBUR

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Excalibur is York University's community newspaper. We publish twice-weekly, and distribute across York and Glendon campuses and various locations within the North York community.

Excalibur is an autonomous corporation with a mandate to inform, educate and provoke thought among York University's diverse population.

The distinct opinions and articles appearing in *Excalibur* constitute our collective voice. However, they belong first and foremost to the individual writers and are not necessarily shared by any other *Excalibur* staff or board member.

Final editorial responsibility is retained by the Editor-in-chief.

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