

NEWS

Election posters subject to racist slander

by Jeannine Amber

This year's York Federation of Students (YFS) general election campaign period has been marred by disturbing incidents of racism.

Ziad Hafez, running for VP Finance, has had many of his posters defaced with racist comments by anonymous members of the York community.

Some posters had swastikas drawn on them while several others have compared Hafez with Saddam Hussein and Al-Assad, the president of Syria who is considered to be a brutal dictator.

Hafez, who is of Syrian descent, feels the attacks make the generalization that all Arabs are dictators or terrorists.

"I have been a victim of racism. I have been humiliated by the entire system at York," Hafez said.

Hafez said that he had been urged not to run in the elections by many of his friends "because of the image of Arabs as a result of the Gulf crisis."

Hafez has decided not to lodge a formal complaint, "because the attacks have been anonymous."

Elissa Horscroft, current YFS equality commissioner, pointed out that even if Hafez wanted to lodge an

official complaint, there are no current provisions to handle such a complaint.

"There is no recognition of this kind of racism on campus. Horscroft said. "It is not at all being recognized as a problem. The university has no policy against racism, there is no specific policy of what constitutes grounds for complaint."

Chet Singh, director of the Centre for Race and Ethnic Relations, said that regardless of the lack of policy, these incidents should be brought to light.

"These things need to be reported because they are an indication of the

campus climate, a climate which is currently one of racism," Singh said.

According to Singh, there are many routes a person can take with a complaint of this sort. They can speak to Singh at the Race and Ethnic Relations Centre, file a complaint with the University Complaint Centre or go to the office of Student Affairs.

"These things rarely get past students," Horscroft said. "There is not enough to motivate administration to do something." Racist slurs have not been limited to Hafez.

Chia-Yi Chua, chair of the Student Centre Corporation (SCC), said that he made a decision not to

run for YFS President because of the many racist comments that had been directed at him during the year.

"I decided not to run because I couldn't handle it (the racist comments)," Chua said. "This shows the kind of electorate we have, where in order to deal with candidates they stoop to this level."

Bashar Abdul Qader, president of the York Arab Student Association, said "racism of this sort must be dealt with by the student government and if Hafez is elected he (as a victim of racism) would be one of the best to deal with it."

None of the other candidates that *Excalibur* spoke with had experienced similar attacks.

Tribune cartoon called racist

by Stephanie Small
McGill Tribune

The *Pillar* and *Le Devoir* may be sued by the Commission des droits de la personne, following the printing of a satirical cartoon by a McGill student in both publications.

Greg Millard's nine-panel cartoon appeared in the last issue of the *Pillar*, the Arts and Science Undergraduate Society's literary magazine. The cartoon satirized Quebec's treatment of ethnic minorities, including blacks, homosexuals, natives, Jews and anglophones.

The commission began its investigation following an unidentified complaint when part of the cartoon was reprinted in *Le Devoir* two weeks ago.

The newspaper printed the cartoon's last panel, which depicted Hitler welcoming readers to a province where "if you are a white francophone, you will surely find a

place. And if you are not . . . well, you will surely be shown your place . . . very soon."

Le Devoir went on to accuse the cartoon's author of racism by associating Quebec with fascism.

But *Pillar* editor, Tony Calabrese, said the newspaper missed the satirical intent of the cartoon by only printing the last panel.

"They took it totally out of context," Calabrese said. "We were just trying to make a point about the way visible minorities are mistreated. It was purposely satirical and exaggerated."

In an attempt to obtain a copy of the entire cartoon, the commission contacted McGill's public relations department at the beginning of reading week.

Public relations officer Anne-Marie Bourdouxhe also complained *Le Devoir* took the cartoon out of context, particularly to highlight tensions between anglophones and francophones in the province.

"It was run in the context of a two-day article on anglophones in Quebec," Bourdouxhe said.

"It was the perfect target because McGill is symbolic of English Canada," Calabrese said.

Calabrese was surprised by the extent of the reaction outside the university.

"I was kind of expecting a reaction from within the McGill community but I didn't get any," Calabrese said. "I was shocked to find out the government agency was looking into it."

Both Calabrese and Bourdouxhe are hoping that once the commission sees the entire cartoon strip, they will decide it is not racist.

The two publications are currently under investigation. If the commission decides the cartoon contravenes the Quebec Charter of Rights, both the *Pillar* and *Le Devoir* could be sued for damages, according to commission spokesperson Danielle Robichaud.

SecurityBeat

Friday Mar. 01

Trespassing Student Centre

Security had a report that a group of males were seen in the area of the unfinished Student Centre. Security officers detained two males. A third male was picked up when he was recognized by security officers in Bethune College. All three were identified as guests and given notices of trespass.

Saturday Mar. 02

Disturbance Central Square

A member of the YFS reported that a group of students were seen tearing down posters of a presidential candidate's election posters. One of the youths was identified as a former student, who held a grudge against that particular candidate.

Monday Mar. 04

Theft (Personal) Parking Lot 8A

A faculty member reported that his front and rear license plates had been stolen (ONT 316 LOP). The car had been parked in the lot since the early morning.

Vandalism (Personal) Parking Lot 8A

A student reported that the front passenger side of his car had been smashed. Nothing was missing from the car.

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