

Letters to the Editor

Address letters to the Editor, EXCALIBUR, York University. Those typed (double-spaced) are appreciated. Letters must be signed for legal reasons. A pseudonym will be used if you have a good reason.

Professor tells us what a Canadian is

Sir:
On Feb. 4 I heard a question raised in Winters Common Room, and nobody answered it. It was addressed to debaters on the subject of the Americanization of Canadian universities. The question was: "What is the Canadian Viewpoint? How does it differ from the American set of values?" The question deserves an answer. So perhaps you won't mind if a staff member answers it — on behalf of those who have answered it in the past.

Perhaps the wittiest answer to it was given by a Canadian historian H.M. Tory, in 1940 who described how three societies work:

"The English creed (is): 'As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.' The American: 'As it was in the beginning, is now, and by God it's got to stop.' The Canadian: 'As it was in the beginning, is now, and ladies and gentlemen, if we are going to make any changes we will appoint a Royal Commission to tell us how it is to be done.'"

There are any number of Americans who still think that Canadians are British or French. Both British and French Canadians have always shown a strong streak of independence from their mother countries, while, at the same time tolerating culture and tradition. Alexander Mackenzie summed it up, for Canada, in 1867:

"Loyalty to the Queen is a noble sentiment in which all true Liberals share, but loyalty to the Queen does not require a man to bow down to her manservant, her maidservant, her ox or her ass."

He said the last word with a bow in the direction of his political opponent, William Macdougall.

Canadians themselves are highly individualistic. Where else, in heaven's name, would you find people scrapping about a Canadian flag — not because they wanted one, because they didn't want one! It was finally put up over the protests of half the country and the repercussions haven't died down yet.

And don't for one minute, think that the Canadian government necessarily voices what the people think. J.L. Ralston, in the House of Commons, pointed that out in 1934 when he said:

"The prime minister is too fond of signing letters in the name of the people of Canada."

So, what does it mean to be a Canadian? Sir Wilfred Laurier said it best, in 1900:

"As long as I live, as long as I have power to use in the service of my country, I shall repel the idea of changing the nature of its different elements. I want the marble to remain the marble; I want the granite to remain the granite; I want the oak to remain the oak."

Ideally, to be a Canadian means that you don't have to throw away your past to save your present, in order to assure your future.

But no one pretends that we've reached that ideal. When we do it will mean that no one will be ashamed of being a hyphenated Canadian. We prefer it that way. We want the best of all worlds, but mastery in our own.

What we will have, then, are Canadians. But they will also be Afro-Canadians, American Canadians, Chinese Canadians, Japanese Canadians, German and French and English and Polish and Hungarian and Scotch and Irish and Jewish and whatever else there is Canadians. And that means even Communist Canadians and Socialist Canadians and NDP Canadians, and Liberal and Conservative, and Social Credit Canadians and men and women and children and student and worker and teacher and professional Canadians, and Catholic and Protestant and

Christian Scientist and atheist and Baptist and fundamentalists and Islamic and Buddhist and Confucianist Canadians, and so, on and on, through the whole vertical and horizontal mosaic that is Canada.

But the meaning of this is that, although it's not necessary to divest yourself from your past and what you are, and no one can do that anyway, Canada insists that you also pay some attention to your present here and our future. Our future and the Canadian contribution to the world will have sunk to the bottom of a bog made up of toleration and good will to all men.

Not even toleration and good will can be used as an excuse for sacrificing one's personal identity. The basic instinct of all humanity is still self-preservation, not death. And this applies to nations as well as individuals.

We are meeting you half way, you people who were not born here, and even more than half. You must now move towards us for the other half. Much of the social history of this country has still to be written but that doesn't mean we haven't got a history, and a culture too. History and culture were made in this country as recently as yesterday. When we write all of our history it will include what we gain from you and your past, but it cannot exclude us and ours. We have a past and it is far more than a hundred years old, for it includes also what was done in Canada by its first inhabitants — Indians and Eskimos, and the whole of that story has yet to be told.

If you can't find Canada's past in your text books you can find it in our libraries. The libraries are packed full of it — even York library — and all you have to do is dig a little, on your own. But don't be misled by the prejudices of the past, although they went into the making of this country, too.

If you use our libraries well, and if you look long enough, and wide enough and deep enough, you will find there the answer — to what it means to be a Canadian.

Cecelia Wallace,
Founders College

YUFA chairman says reporter lied

Sir:
I must protest. Your reporter did not misinterpret me; he fabricated statements on an issue which we did not even discuss (Tuition might jump — profs are blamed, EX-CALIBUR, 22 January, 1970).

The claim that I "wouldn't feel guilty about a tuition increase next year if (I) got (my) salary increase" is completely opposed to anything I have ever said, publicly or privately. In fact, I strongly contend that tuition fees should be abolished completely.

W.H. Coons,
chairman,
York University Faculty
Association

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Mr. Coons, you are a liar. In a telephone interview with you Wednesday morning (Jan. 21) I asked you if you would feel guilty if tuition fees were raised as a result of an increase in your salary. "I wouldn't feel guilty about it," was your reply. I trust my ears better than you should trust your memory. — John King.

Won't stop Spadina: no expert opinions

Dear Mr. Granatstein:

I received the petition of the "Stop Spadina — Save Our City Committee" sponsored by yourself, and Messrs. Cook, Creal, Eisen, Mandel and Rubinoff. As one of those whose major intellectual and professional commitments are in the field of transport and relationship between transport and urban growth and characteristics, I have been watching Anti-Spadina Expressway with considerable interest, and, I have to add, with growing alarm at the anti-intellectual attitudes which tend to develop around it.

I am finding it significant that groups attacking the project have not been able to enlist the support of professional opinion, nor, for that matter no attempt has been made for the sponsors to approach, for example, members of the York University Transport Centre for an exchange of views.

The enclosure of a biased, ill-reasoned propaganda article by Mrs. Jacobs as the only bit of reasoning supporting the campaign is not quite consistent with the standards of reasoned action which should prevail at a place of higher learning. I wonder how historians, poets or philosophers would react to a manifesto which should be based on a good knowledge of their fields written by engineers who would seek inspiration from an article written by a dentist in The Globe and Mail.

K.W. Studnicki-Gizbert,
Economics

Experts messed up: read The Bad Trip

Dear Mr. Studnicki-Gizbert:

Thank you for your letter about the York Committee to Stop Spadina and Save Our City. Any publicity is better than no publicity.

I used to put a good deal of faith in experts. Planning would solve all our problems, eliminate the inequities of the capitalistic system, and assure us all of decent

housing and attractive cities. Somehow it hasn't worked out that way. The planners have taken over, but nothing has changed, except for the worse. In our cities particularly, the "Transportation experts" have had free rein and they have used it to destroy communities for the sake of a few minutes travelling time. The experts, I now feel, are so wrapped up in their own theories that they cannot see the effects of their planning on people. I still feel that cities are for people, not cars. Unfortunately, you do not.

May I suggest that you read The Bad Trip by David and Nadine Nowlan. Your vaunted experts do not come off too well there. Finally, I would be delighted to arrange a public debate at York that would pit a representative of the Stop Spadina Committee against an expert from the York Transport Centre.

J.L. Granatstein,
History

Anti-Spadina people polluting the air

Sir:

I would like to bring to your attention a new form of hypocrisy displayed on the campus. This is by the owners of cars which proudly display 'Stop Spadina' on their fenders, only to leave their cars parked driverless and with the engine running. We are aware that this practice adds more carbon gases to the atmosphere than driving along the road. But, it will often be said, one car for two or three minutes is not going to make any difference. To which we reply: 'What if everybody did it?'. Rest assured, that until told over and over, everybody will do it, but fortunately everybody is not so unthinking, ignorant and/or lazy. And Spadina?

Gordon T. Churchill.

Women have right to show off bodies

Sir:

I read with interest the small item on the front page of EX-CALIBUR last week, dealing with the picketing of a beauty contest by members of the Women's Liberation group.

While I would agree that women in this society have certain valid demands that should be met as soon as possible, I would like to comment on one small point that seems repugnant to me: that being the definition construed upon 'liberation'.

To me, liberation means 'freedom from'. Freedom from discrimination, from a dual standard, etc., are some examples of what should be considered areas

in which the forces of 'liberation' could play a meaningful role. However, there is another aspect of freedom — 'freedom to' — which members of Women's Liberation tend to play down. A woman should have the freedom to enter a beauty contest if she so desires, and she should have, generally speaking, freedom to do all those things which seem reprehensible to Women's Liberation.

In short, woman, just like a man, should have the freedom to order her life as she sees fit. Now, I've never yet heard of a beauty contest in which coercive methods were used to obtain participants. . .

Peter Robertson,
Glendon III

Great figure "8"



but nobody noticed

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