

Excaliburians unite:

York Green Committee co-chief criticizes Excalibur

I speak here, not as the voice of a mythical collective entity called the York Green Committee, but as a concerned individual of this university. This article is an attempt to detail the criticism originated in Shades of Green, our newsletter, last term.

— JAMES BULL (co-chairman, York Green Committee)

A while ago a friend, distressed by my concern with various issues, suggested that one should stay out of other people's business. This is a valid suggestion where warranted. It is not warranted in the field of university newspapers. As a good Excaliburian, EXCALIBUR is my business and yours. (N.B. DEFINITION: Excaliburian — any member of this university who faithfully retrieves his copy every Thursday in desperate need of some communication with the other 7,000 individuals on campus.)

This "official weekly of York University" circulates to over 17,000 people and is the principal voice of the students. As such the attitudes expressed in EXCALIBUR tend to be taken as representative of the attitudes of the students themselves. Also, it must be pointed out that EXCALIBUR is not free. EXCALIBUR'S financial existence depends on your tuition and grants from your government. Probably it is possible to calculate the exact cost of each issue to you as a student and a taxpayer. The point is that you do pay for each and every issue. EXCALIBUR is necessarily your business. Silence is taken as tacit approval and I do not approve of my "official weekly".

My criticism has its source in the apparent radical philosophy of this newspaper. Let there be no semantic mistakes — radical can refer to means or ends. Most people would agree that in some situations radical change is a necessity as the final alternative. However radicals see society as a rotten structure whose problems can only be solved by tearing it down. Thus in most situations I disagree with these radical ends. I must also disagree with the attitude that radical means (revolution not evolution) are the only way to effect change. It is on this basis that I disapprove of EXCALIBUR'S radical orientation.

This criticism can be justified by the simple quantity of material printed each week espousing radical ideals. This fall we have experienced a series of 2-page articles on Cuba, 2 reprints from YSM's handbook and articles by the Liberation New Service, etc. The result is that each week a major proportion of our newspaper has been exclusively devoted to material with radical orientations. The following quotation from the editorial of Oct. 23 seems to indicate the philosophy of the editorial staff. "There is no way that the mass of workers who are killing themselves for bare living wages will ever win as long as men like William P. Scott, chairman of York's board of governors, Henry Ford and E.P. Taylor exploit the natural and

human resources of the world to maintain economic and political power for their own interest." Aside from the fact that such a position is neither rational or valid, it does indicate the bias of the editorial staff. Although I disagree with this bias, I don't think it can or need be eliminated completely. However, the editorial staff should attempt to be more objective in their selection of material. Up to this point EXCALIBUR seems to have failed in a search for this acceptable degree of objectivity.

The question arises if EXCALIBUR should attempt to be objective. Yes — because it is not a privately-owned weekly created to express a particular viewpoint, but an "official weekly", owned by, and operated for the students of this university. There is no collective entity called York University that a newspaper can hope to represent. It can only attempt to objectively select its material in an effort to reveal both sides of a question leaving rational, critical choice to the individual. It is essential to note that objectivity does not exclude opinions — radical or otherwise. However it does necessitate the airing of more than one viewpoint. To quote Shades of Green, EXCALIBUR operates more on the basis of an "imposed monologue" than the ideal of a "rational dialogue". The danger with this radical preoccupation is that it is at the expense of other news coverage. This was made obvious to me in EXCALIBUR'S coverage of the birth and development of the York Green Committee.

The forerunner of Shades of Green was a notice drafted

by students following the original meeting of the Green Committee. This notice was issued as a press release. The Toronto Daily Star, CHUM and the CBC quoted it and YGC members when reporting the birth of the Green Committee. To be specific — the Star ran a major article on the front page of the Metro news section. EXCALIBUR was issued the same press release at the same time. I would not be so presumptuous to say that this notice was so important that it be entirely quoted. However in the Star's judgment it was important enough to be reported. I am not extolling the objective virtues of the Star but a lack of some in EXCALIBUR. Their coverage has been restricted to a 7-sentence article in the bottom corner of the third last page. The implications of that article do not represent the York Green Committee. As the official university weekly it seems to be lacking in its coverage of the growth of this particular campus group.

However, I do not ask for a university newspaper that is a microcosm of a city-wide daily. There is a need for radical viewpoints, and material of radical nature should be an important part of a university newspaper. But when radical philosophy infringes on objective coverage of news and issues, it has gone too far. For example on Oct. 16 EXCALIBUR printed an article praising the Communist revolution in China. An accompanying article such as "Freedom is not Cheap" (Shades of Green, Vol. 1, No. 4) recounting one man's personal experiences with Communist revolution, would have balanced discussion of this question in a more objective manner. If EXCALIBUR strove for rational dialogue of this sort, the students would benefit a great deal more.

The means to this end are simple. EXCALIBUR should devote a major proportion of our newspaper to feedback from the students in the form of letters to the editor, contributed articles, etc. Present efforts in this regard are minimal. Student opinions are there, if sought and printed. Also the radical viewpoint should be balanced by moderate viewpoints in a search for rational dialogue and the resulting increase in objective coverage. Implementation of these suggestions is at least a start towards an "official weekly" that is of greater value to the individual student of this university. Excaliburians should unite to demand a newspaper of this nature.

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The York Green Committee, established in October, is led by co-chairmen Tim Delaney and James Bull. The group has about 15 adherents. Politically active they lie right of center on York's political spectrum. They espouse the virtues of capitalism which they say hasn't really ever had a chance to show how good it is. They are openly anti everything that smacks of the left as being irresponsibly activist. At present, they are working to develop a slate which they hope will sweep the CYSF elections in February.

Corrections

1. EXCALIBUR is the university-wide student newspaper of York University sanctioned by the Council of the York Student Federation.

2. The attitudes of the articles in EXCALIBUR are those of the writers, or if unsigned, the editor, and represent no other individual or official body on campus... except by coincidence.

3. EXCALIBUR receives an annual grant from CYSF towards the paper's annual budget. The \$18,000 we received this year came from the \$10 tax CYSF gets for each student from its constituent college members. It is not stolen from either your tuition fees or government tax monies. You pay a little over \$3 this year for 26 issues of the paper, less than half of its production costs. The remainder is paid for by advertising.

4. EXCALIBUR does not operate on the principle of "imposed monologue." Any York student can write for the paper. The only criteria used in deciding whether to print a story are journalistic (ie. quality of writing and factual correctness). We have, of course, ignored these criteria on this page for this issue.

5. Present efforts at EXCALIBUR to cover feedback to the paper or to print contributions are NOT minimal. We have a policy of printing every letter we receive, unedited. After one issue — Nov. 20 — we received complaints that we had run too many letters.

Shades of truth from Shades of Green

On legislated culture

After having tried to understand what it is that Quebec wants and having seen some of the methods that are employed to achieve their ends, I feel that I have to speak up for myself.

I feel that the cries of the Quebecois for equal rights are justified. However, I fail to understand the need of the Quebecois to protect their culture. Do they feel they will lose their culture unless it is maintained through legislation? Have Anglo-Canadians lost their culture? Most English-speaking Canadians will speak with pride when you ask them what part of Europe their grandparents came from. They are proud of their heritage and their old traditions, yet they don't feel that they have to protect their culture. Granted, the problem is more serious for French-Canadians. They are a minority. But a person who wants to maintain a 'distinct' culture will do so. That is why we have the Robbie Burns societies and the Italian picnics on Centre Island.

When a French Canadian is asked about his culture he speaks about the French language, the Church and the 'old traditions'. Now let me ask a question of the Quebecois and I ask it as a Canadian: What has the French culture done for Canada? Was it the French who settled Canada's West and North? Was it the French who developed Canadian industry? Did the French build the railways or did they stay on their farms while Canada grew? (or rather while Canada grew English?)

Let me phrase my opinion on the protection of the French culture another way. Quebec reminds me of the person who attends a party, stands in a corner by himself, watches the party begin to swing, and once everyone is having a good time, steps out and blames the people in attendance because he is 'left out'. Why

should we of Anglo Canadian heritage be held responsible for the tardiness and faults of Quebec's own political and clerical leaders???

—UNSIGNED,
Nov. 18.

Freedom is not cheap

Freedom is not cheap. Most Canadian students do not realize the price of freedom because they were born into it. I was born in the Ukraine and was lucky enough to escape with my family when the Communists occupied my country. My relatives are now either dead or in Siberia because of their opposition to Communism. A person cannot express his views on any subject because his neighbour may be an informer. Most Communist countries are run by about three per cent of the population. There are no free elections which may be hard for you to believe. But you think about it for a minute; no free elections whatsoever.

Perhaps some of your left-wing friends have been telling you how great Communism is. If Communism is so great, why is there the Berlin Wall? Why are the borders of Russia guarded? To prevent people from getting inside? I doubt it! And what about Czechoslovakia? The people trying to free themselves from Communism ended up being 'protected' by Russian tanks. It is for the above reasons that I support and urge you to support the fight against Communism even if it means endorsing the war in Vietnam. If you do not believe the words that I write, ask anybody who is from a Communist country. They will tell you that there is no freedom. If we do not act to curb the spread of Communism there will be no freedom here either. Remember, freedom is not cheap.

—UNSIGNED
Nov. 18

Vanier Council and CYSF

We were pleased to hear that Vanier Council has decided to hold a referendum on that college's membership on our local university-wide redundancy known as the Council of the York Student Federation. In a similar referendum last year, McLaughlin College voted to remain outside of CYSF (then known as YSC). McLaughlin, at that time, was not a member of the council, and in the first vote, the college did vote against joining the council. However, because of charges of so-called 'illegal procedures' levelled by the newly-founded York Sunday Movement (now the York Student Movement), a new referendum was held, and a minority of the college membership voted narrowly to join CYSF.

It is our opinion that all of the jobs done by CYSF at the moment could be done by a loose confederation of college council presidents and/or (in the case of McLaughlin College) external affairs commissioners. EXCALIBUR is a definite waste of time and money, not only because the present editor refuses to print news relevant to York students (in other words, news which students will read with interest), but because EXCALIBUR, in general, runs counter to York's college system in that it tends to represent the university as a type of multiversity which image York is not properly represented by. Festival and Winter Carnival have invariably been flops, both financially and in terms of their entertainment value.

CYSF also poses a threat to the students of this university in that, by incorporating to borrow money from the banks to build "a student union building" (Paul Koster, president of CYSF) they run the danger of going so much into debt that they are required to raise the student activity fee to an unheard-of amount. Although, this

year, CYSF has been able to keep its nose fairly clean, CYSF can easily be taken over by the student radical minority, with the help of an apathetic, but moderate, minority. With a very low vote last year by the "silent" — and may we add, inactive — "majority", the radicals came out en masse and almost elected several of their cohorts to CYSF (in some cases they succeeded).

This year, we of the York Green Committee hope to help the moderate majority become active this year.

Our first step will be to urge the members of Vanier College to withdraw from CYSF.

—TIM DELANEY
Nov. 27.

Dennison again

As a group concerned with continued growth in a stable manner, the York Green Committee formally endorsed William Dennison, on Nov. 19 for the position of mayor of Toronto. In a conference at City Hall last week, members of the YGC and Mayor Dennison agreed to public release of this endorsement. We believe that Mayor Dennison combines the assets of capable administration and progressive ideology that are necessary for the measured growth of a complex metropolitan centre. One sees in Montreal, a city of comparable size, the financial and social foundering that can result if an administrator is not at the helm. We have, in Mayor Dennison, a man of long and varied experience in working with council that has assured and will continue to assure, Toronto of growth and development in all areas. I am particularly pleased with Mayor Dennison's stand on the major issues of this campaign.

JAMES BULL
Nov. 27

Shades of Green is the weekly newsletter of the York Green Committee. James Bull is the editor.