

# Letters to the Editor

Address letters to the Editor, EXCALIBUR, York University. Letters must be signed for legal reasons. A pseudonym will be used if you have a good reason. Those typed will be given preference.

## United Canada Rally

I have just experienced a saddening exhibition of Canadian "democracy" at the rally for a "united" Canada. I was on the speakers' list, but since we were only given an hour to discuss the "recent" crisis in the Canadian democracy, (with instructions to stay on topic), the microphones were withdrawn before I had a chance to speak.

I support Professor Granatstein's condemnation of the War Measures Act and of the blind emotion which supports it, an emotion prevalent at the rally. I support Professor Granatstein's pleas, but from another perspective. I have been an independentist for some years.

Those who organized the rally proclaimed they did so not out of any political philosophy. They claim to be "value-free" while they support the War Measures Act (in fact felt there should be no discussion on its validity), and believe that Canadian unity and peace is being preserved by the government.

One organizer said we are now in a political nightmare. Canada is a political nightmare, but it has been for some time. Canada united, bilingual, and bicultural is a myth. I say this as a bilingual English Canadian who has lived in Quebec with the Quebecois.

The organizers mourned the violent and unnecessary death of Pierre Laporte. But where were they and where was this

massive demonstration — where was their concern — when the B & B report came out? How many of them have read it? I suggest that their concern is rather belated.

The organizers would like to return to the Canada of two weeks ago. What Canada is this? It is a country whose jails are filled with Indians and the poor. It is the country whose prime minister says of the hundreds of deaths from illegal abortion, "So what?" It is the country whose destitute die on the streets from "natural" causes.

It is the country where separatist and even moderate left wing teachers were purged from Quebec's junior colleges. It is the country which clubbed and arrested hundreds of the thousands who came out to protest Bill 63, in Quebec City last year.

It is the country which condemns and murders those who in desperation rebel (Chenier, Riel) and where Vallieres and Gagnon were held for years without trial. And it is the country responsible for the psychological and economic oppression of the Quebecois. It is a government which acquiesces to violence, with a prime minister who is only interested in condemning violence when it is politically convenient and expedient as in the case of Laporte. (But not in Biafra or over abortion.)

Canadians seem only to concern themselves with violence when it is too blatant to shut out. But they find it easy to ignore the violence done to themselves and to other "invisible" Canadians every day.

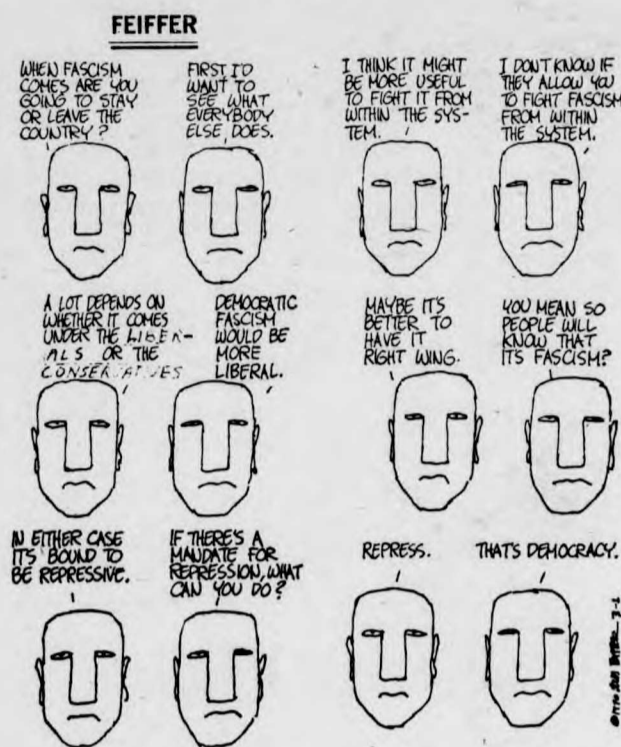
The students at that rally were not interested in the root causes which make independence the solution adhered to by the majority of young Quebecois. In Canada

democracy has not yet been abrogated so much by physical violence, as by an almost unbounded capacity to ignore those people and those facts that are disturbing. When this method fails, naked repression is the final solution.

A government which constantly uses totalitarian measures to destroy the minds and bodies of its citizens, is hardly a

legitimate government. I do not condone violence, but I condemn the hypocrisy which condemns the FLQ, but which ignores or condones the violence perpetrated every day in the name of liberal democracy and "free" enterprise.

Marilynne Glick  
Law I



## Seer's Pursey Faggot

Seer: People who are into the movement towards human liberation and into building a non-alienating people's culture are conscious of the harm that self-inflating and intolerant "humor" can do.

You've fucked our heads. With 100 midi dresses, rooster hair cuts and speed coming to represent the freak community; it looked like the earthy, children of Woodstock types we've seen around the Winters common room and the Seer office were into slightly better things. Go back to the Zumberger, sweethearts.

You don't make it. Last week's issue of Seer contained a vulgar and cheap rendition of frat-house toilet humor in the form of Pursey Faggot, a kinky advice for the lovelorn column. Pursey Faggot is not funny. It's as sad as only human sexual oppression can be.

We think that perversion is relative; that bi-sexuality is a natural human trait; that any kind of love is a valid expression of the human experience on this frigid society.

People who laugh at and patronize homosexuality are expressing fears about their own sexuality. There is a very real Pursey Faggot. He lives in the heads of the Seer staff who dreamt him up.

Karen Roxborough - Glendon I  
William Bert - Glendon I  
Pat Macmillan - Fine Arts

## Reply to Americanized Fervour

Dear Mr. Rothschild:

I would like, if you don't mind, to judge you on your "performance" in the letters column of Excalibur, Oct. 8. It very much reminded me of an American professor, perhaps you, at a rally in Winter's junior common room Friday, Oct. 9. He, too, wanted to be judged on his performance.

Let me first make clear, however, that I do not mean to "persecute" you. I simply feel that your letter best exemplified the paranoid reaction with which the motion on the release of citizenship statistics was greeted at the Senate meeting. You are, I suppose, an "ideal type".

The easiest way to deal with your letter is to start at the beginning, where your being "upset" becomes apparent in a great string of exclamations such as "Fuck the Canadians! Fuck the Americans!" etc.

Personally, and as a Canadian, too, I found your opening quite offensive. Your implication seems to have been that Canadian nationalism equates with "Racism!" and "the feeling that one group is inherently superior to another!". Besides, it was hysterical; it was "pop culture"; and it was very American.

Still, I'm glad you were upset and wrote as you did. It is certainly preferable to the usual "humorous" reference to the "Inquisition" or the other clever analogies. If you do use all the cliches, at least you don't use them lightly.

One of the most common of them is the "I am an American who is anti-American" theme. You tell us that you left the States because you were being "hounded" by American flags, and the draft, of course. Although I certainly do not deny that there is truth in this, I fail to see how your stepping across the border stripped you of American attitudes and ideas.

Your thinking that all nationalism is "rigid, stultifying, mystifying, fearful, demented" is, I think, a good example. It typifies the attitude of the best scholars in America today, the ones at Harvard and other imperial universities. They hold this opinion for good humanitarian reasons; it's popularity, however, stems from the fact that it couldn't possibly harm the ultimate best interests of the United States, and the so-called multinational corporations.

There is a lot of truth in this cosmopolitanist dogma, just as there is in the nationalist dogma. The experience of Nazism is the background for the one, the emergence of the American empire that of the other. If you really wanted to fight fascism, however, I can't understand why you did not stay in the United States, where it seems to be developing in its purest form.

Our struggle in Canada is aimed at preventing the extension of American-style fascism to our country, extension either by

simple absorption, or by the more subtle process of cultural imperialism. In the university we must be at least "arbitrary" enough to stem a cultural invasion of major proportions. If you would not have us using citizenship as the measure, what would you use — a "canadianization test"? That smells like fascism to me.

I'm getting ahead of myself, however. You tell us that our nationalistic CYSF is "not really concerned with the issue of education, which supposedly is the freeing of the mind, the freeing of the self from dogma, ideology, intolerance, fear, ignorance, ethnocentrism and nationalism." You go on to say that good teaching is international.

Let us be realistic, then. Your "supposedly" covers a lot of ground, and shows that even you have doubts about how "educated" one can be. By your standards very few people at York are really educated, and only a small proportion of graduates emerge "educated". I think this is true. I further believe that most undergraduates are impressed not so much by ideas as by attitudes and life-styles. If they are exposed to a lot of American professors, they tend to adapt American attitudes. This is probably unfortunate, but I think it is true.

"If a teacher is a good teacher" you ask, "what difference does it make if he is from Afganistan, America, Ireland or Mars?" You say you would like to meet one, though you do not know any.

Why would you like to meet a Martian teacher, if there is no difference between him and a teacher from America? Could it be that his national or cosmic viewpoint is very different from yours because he comes from Mars? You seem at least to admit the benefit of exposure to different national mentalities.

The question is not Afghanization here at York, however. To bring in the global village is a very common technique for obfuscating the real issue, that of one nation's culture, — America's — dominating that of all others.

Your suggestions that we hit America where it hurts by not buying American consumer goods and by not being so middle-class are well-taken. I also thought your idea of demonstrating in front of General Motors, General Electric, etc. was a good one for the student council. I had another person tell me that all these students should be out on the picket lines with the workers getting their support rather than causing trouble over nationalism and wasting their energy. So are they all, all Motherhood suggestions.

"Fascists dislike ideas as well as deeds which threaten their view of the world," you say. Nobody is going to disagree, of course. Still, I don't think you are a fascist, even

though by the tone of your letter it seems that you dislike our ideas about scholarship not being so international as you believe. Your discussion of fascism and nationalism lacks something, I think.

This is getting tedious and redundant, as argument over this subject tends to do. I admire the editor of EXCALIBUR for his perseverance in continuing to hammer away at the stone wall of academic indifference. (I would also like to mention, while the subject is before our attention, that this letter is in no way speaking for EXCALIBUR.)

Your statement "People are free to accept or reject ideas" of course leaves your students "free" to reject your ideas on Canadian nationalism. It was your attitude, not your ideas, that was the most interesting aspect of your letter, anyway.

It is obvious from your letter that, to you personally, the experience of Nazism is the most central fact of this century. When you mention that your family was German-Jewish this becomes entirely understandable, as does your hatred for nationalism.

As Canadian nationalists, on the other hand, the disappearance of Canada, culturally as well as economically, is our chief concern at the moment. We resent what seems to be your rather hasty decision to equate our struggle which is simply to preserve and recover our right to make our own decisions — with the turmoil that was Germany in 1933.

It is difficult, as you and Mr. Brookes have also found, to avoid speaking to the extreme on each side of this dispute. Some of this comes out in this letter, I'm sure. There is something of the generation gap in it, too.

Perhaps much misunderstanding arises because faculty lethargy and self-interest are being challenged. For there seems to be a real, and silly, fear for one's job behind much of the posturing and rhetoric. Do you think there is going to be a "purge" after the release of citizenship statistics? Or that there will be some kind of discrimination against American professors already here?

If American internal politics continues down the road it has taken, there are likely to be 20 American applications for every Canadian application for academic positions at York. (The choice confronts us right now, I've been told by unreliable sources.)

We have to decide whether we want this university to serve Canada, or whether we want it to be an imperial institution with a few representative aborigines. The senate decision to shroud the facts in mystery reflects the decision the faculty have made. All we can do is hope you will change your colonial minds.

Greg McConnell, Arts IV

## Excalibur

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