

Excalibur

Everything secret degenerates; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

The Toronto Crisis

Analogies are funny things. They never quite make the parallel exact, but sometimes they're useful.

It takes a bit of imagination to make the connections and sometimes we worry that imagination is the price to be paid for a university education. But we decided we had to present you with this small analogy. Call it an allegory if you will.

One day in the future a small group of dedicated and intelligent radicals kidnap the chairman of the Toronto Transit Commission and hold him for ransom. Their demands for his release include the implementation of a massive, pollution-free rapid transit system, a halt to arbitrary expropriation, the immediate takeover and nationalization of all pollution producing industries, the conversion of manufacturing industries from luxury goods to socially useful items and the release of a group of people jailed the year before for their parts in the unsuccessful demonstrations to stop the Spadina Expressway.

The kidnapers release messages explaining that they come from varied backgrounds. One is an unemployed labourer who worked for years in his union for better wages and working conditions and for worker's control in the factory. Another is a mother of four children who has been on welfare for six years since her husband left her. She has been active in welfare rights groups. A third is a former student who quit because of the irrelevance of his classes to the problems he saw in the society. He worked for several years in all three political parties. First with the Conservatives, then the Liberals in Trudeau's time and then with the NDP.

The messages describe the growing futility the three felt after trying to work through the "normal democratic" channels.

The Premier declares a state of emergency — the police are given special powers. The mayor refuses to negotiate with the kidnapers.

All this goes on as a backdrop to municipal election in which a coalition of young radical intellectuals, a

growing radical labour force, welfare and tenants groups has developed to the point where they have a real chance of toppling the old guard.

The police begin a massive wave of arrests, students, labour leaders, entertainers sympathetic to radical causes, the head of the city's family planning bureau, several writers and scores of journalists are picked up and held without charge for up to three weeks.

New public opinion polls show the kidnapers are gaining in public support.

The kidnapers offer to negotiate but the mayor refuses again and again. There is talk of division on city council. The premier seems to be calling all the shots.

The army is called in.

The police announce that they are closing in on the kidnapers. The kidnapers offer once again to negotiate but the mayor refuses. The TTC chairman is found dead.

The night before the election the mayor comes on television and charges that the kidnapers and the opposition party are working together.

The old guard is swept into power in the election. The mayor hails his reelection as a victory for civil law and order.

Hardly noticed in all the uproar is a piece in the paper about a rally held at a suburban university.

Two thousand students — the largest gathering ever held at the university — meets to show support for "Toronto the Good." The organizers contend that rally is a political. When several liberal professors question the necessity for the special police powers, they are booed.

When a student tries to explain the problems that have beset the city he is booed off the stage.

A student trying to read a statement describing the history of the movement for democracy in the city is told that his statement is political and he cannot continue.

Two days later the kidnapers are caught and the city breathes a sigh of relief.



"A tourist? I thought you said he was a terrorist!"

Letters to the Editor



Surprising

It surprises me that EXCALIBUR would run an ad such as the one which appeared on page 5 of your January 7 edition.

Your paper is ordinarily quite, shall we say, vigorous in its support of "good" causes, and has exhibited a commendable concern for our deteriorating environment.

Has it escaped your notice that one of the factors in the diminution of rare wildlife is the importation of exotic animals by pet stores?

Most of the cats mentioned are on the endangered species lists. I trust that you accepted the ad through ignorance and not through greed.

Viola G. Stephens.

Bad Taste

The Editor, Excalibur.
Dear Sir:

Considering the adverse effects that life in North America has on European animals, and most owners' lack of knowledge about their living conditions and requirements, I feel it was in rather bad taste that EXCALIBUR accepted the advertisement from "The Queen's Clipper" in the Jan. 7/71 issue.

Please regard the chain on the leopard in the advertisement.

Michael Johnson
Vanier I.

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