

EDITORIAL

Canucks versus Indians

Let's face it: Canada is breaking apart into regional and political blocs. The Western coalition, Ontario Central, Bloc Quebecois and the Atlantic are becoming increasingly disparate and isolated partners in confederation.

The most recent strain on the country has come from the First Nation sovereignty crisis that floods the media every day. The mob scenes between Indians and the army have become a sick spectacle as Canadians who used to reproach South Africa now have an abundance of our own racist tensions.

Case in point, if Quebec is legitimized in labelling itself a distinct society above and beyond its membership in Canada, then to avoid a contradiction, we must also see the parallel in aboriginal claims for autonomy. Natives want their own nation; they want to be partners, not just members of Canada.

It's not surprising since Ottawa's power has gradually been siphoned away by provincial legislatures. Mulroney and his Cabinet were not able to "bond" the country together with Meech, nor have they been able to diffuse the rising frustration of Native Canadians.

After showing so much flexibility with Quebec at the Meech bargaining tables (bending over backwards to accommodate them), now Ottawa is faced with another sovereignty crisis but has flatly refused to "negotiate with a gun pointed to its head." What a strange turn of principle, considering Mulroney withdrew his offer of a full investigation into aboriginal rights once Native MLA Elijah Harper had killed the deal in Manitoba legislature.

The government has branded the Indian warriors as terrorists and criminals acting outside Canadian law. Native pride, however, has never been stronger or more vocal in this country. The power all hinges on the warriors who have challenged the superficial promises of a government which has patronized them since 1867. After the Indian Act had been signed, Natives were relegated from the position of equal partners into wards of the Canadian state.

After some early attempts at reconciliation, our leaders sent in the army to shoot a very bad version of a "Canucks versus Indians" melodrama. Think of the irony. Canada is a land of diplomats and bureaucrats, not shining Cowboys and evil Indians.

Several aboriginal chiefs accurately predicted that the localized Quebec/Indian conflicts would escalate into full-scale civil disobedience across the country. If Natives want to continue to provoke provincial and federal governments into action, they have thousands of roads and bridges and guns at their disposal across this huge country.

Many non-natives who had been sympathetic to the Indians' defiance, however, have lost patience, claiming that no citizen or group (except the police or the army) has the right to bear arms in Canada or otherwise interfere with the lives of law-abiding citizens.

But who is actually interfering and who is merely reacting?

Our staff meeting will be at 4:00 pm on Wednesday afternoon. A new column will be under review.

EXCALIBUR

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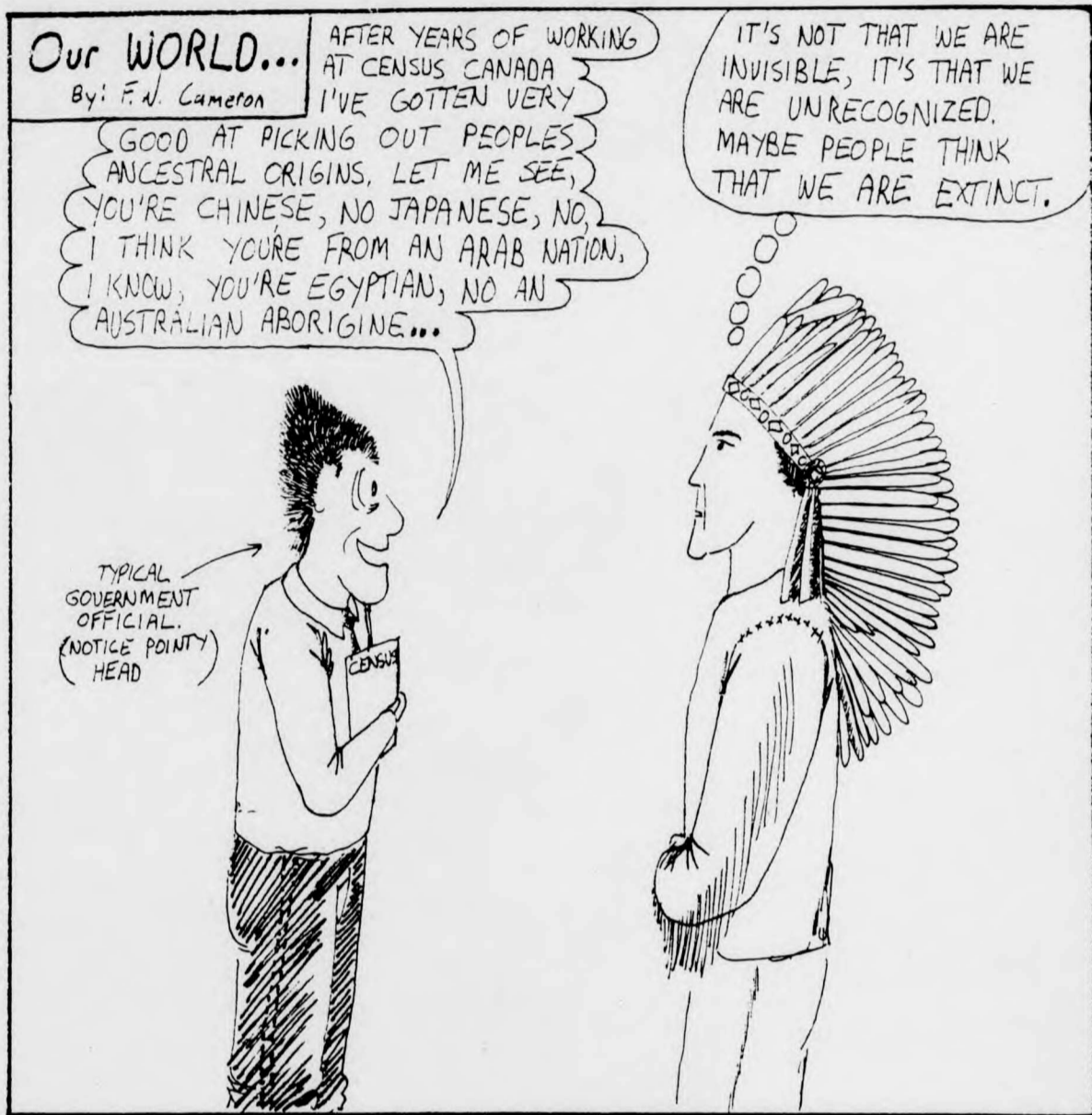
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 Downsview M3J 1P3



LETTERS

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of Excalibur staff or directors. However, letters judged to be racist, sexist or libellous by the editor will be refused. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

Reviewer strung up by the gills

To the editor,

Dear Mr. Gazzola,

Re: Your August 29th, 1990 review of the Northern Pikes' album *Snow in June*.

I read the review you wrote about the Northern Pikes' latest release *Snow in June*, and to be honest, I found your article insulting. And as I continued to read it, I got angrier and angrier because of your comments. I respect your right of not liking their music (I have some musical distastes myself). However, I feel that you did not have to cut them up so harshly.

Contrary to your beliefs, their songs neither sound alike nor are they awkward and clumsy. I thought that the idea of an album is to have a different variety of songs. And if one listens to the record, one can see that a song like "Shadow of Doubt" does not sound like "Kiss Me You Fool" or that "She Ain't Pretty" is not identical to "Snow in June" the title cut. And the band, along with their producers, have arranged the songs in some kind of flowing order and I believe they have succeeded in their attempt.

The Pikes have steadily improved and matured in both their live shows and their songwriting since releasing their first two independent records, *The Northern Pikes* (1984) and *Scene in North America* (1985). Their first Virgin

Record release *Big Blue Sky* (1987) went gold in Canada, while *Snow in June* went gold here as well, but in only six weeks after its release! That is pretty fast for a record that you think "sounded awkward and clumsy." Obviously, not everyone shared that feeling.

The Pikes played to a packed crowd in the Founders cafeteria on September 6th, 1990. Their performance was strong and impressive. Having seen them many times, I believe that that was one of their best gigs to date. One of the Pikes' strong points is their shows and they sure did not disappoint anyone that night. If you did not see them that night, perhaps the next time they are in town, you should go and see them. Their performance may change your opinion about them.

Karen Ramdohr

Foreign students not aliens

To the editor,

I was baffled to read the allegations in The YFS/FEY Student Handbook 1990-91, suggesting the *Survival Guide for Foreign Students* is "extremely racist." Since it was first published in 1986 I have not had a single complaint concerning its content and, more importantly, I have received praise from its users — foreign students. That aside, let

me deal with the specific objections.

The section on Canadian law is included in an effort to ensure that students from other countries understand their rights while here. A Student Authorization, issued by Canadian Immigration, can be revoked should the student be convicted of any "criminal" offence no matter how minor. Petty Theft and Shoplifting (theft under \$200) are given as examples of minor criminal offenses that may, upon conviction, lead to a deportation order being issued. It is my obligation to ensure that foreign students are aware of these conditions, in the same way that other publications speak to the issue of illegal drug use. Not because assumptions about students have been made in either case, but rather because of the student's need to know. The suggestion that the accompanying graphic depicts a Native person is absurd.

Two other graphics are cited in the YFS/FEY Handbook as allegedly reinforcing the claim of a racist undertone. The first is a graphic of "outer space." It is a representation of a part of the world's solar system and is placed in the section on Climate. The second graphic of concern to YFS/FEY (the spaceship) was in fact chosen because it represented the 'alien'-ation that many foreign students feel after dealing with Canadian Immigration officials. Upon reflection one might convince me that, without the context in which it (the graphic) was chosen made obvious, the choice is at worst

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