

Excalibur

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

editorial

Excalibur, is the York University weekly and is independent politically. Opinions expressed are the writer's and those unsigned are the responsibility of the editor. Excalibur attempts to be an agent of social change. Typography by Foto Set, printed at Delta Web, Excalibur is published by Excalibur Publications, a body incorporated under the laws of Ontario.

News 667-3201

Advertising 667-3800

Trading write-offs for necessities

Our student government (CYSF) has a long-standing and well-deserved reputation — it cannot organize successful social events.

This has been true of student councils for many years here at York. CYSF has a small budget (around \$90,000) and consequently has a small social budget. They're in competition with all the various college councils who have many tens of thousands of dollars to play with and whose prime concern is collegial social life.

So CYSF's social program is consistently, year after year, a series of dismal flops.

If the CYSF social program were to disappear tomorrow, no one would miss it.

The same can't be said about Harbinger. An organization which is dependent for a large part of its funding from CYSF, it would indeed be sorely missed if it were to disappear tomorrow.

The many hundreds of students who turn to it in the course of the year, to find help with sex and sex-related problems, would miss it a lot. Peer counselling for these types of problems is an absolutely essential companion to "professional counselling". It's a shame that places like Harbinger are so rare.

But if this is true, how does one explain the actions of the CYSF. A social program that everyone knows will flop and that wouldn't be missed if none of it happened, will receive \$4,000 in CYSF's budget, down a mere \$500 from last year.

Harbinger, an already under-funded and extremely valuable service, will receive only \$2,000, down \$6,000 from last year's grant of \$8,000.

Harbinger's budget gets cut, *Excalibur*, the Course Unions and Radio York are all under-financed, while CYSF's social budget remains sacrosanct.

It's nice to know that there are some students at York who want to do something about this. A group of people who support Harbinger are circulating a petition to try and get CYSF to fund it so it can continue at its present level of service. It is a first step in a campaign to keep Harbinger, the most seriously affected by CYSF's free-swinging axe, from the chopping block.

It's a step in the right direction.

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"The Axe-man Cometh," now performing at Theatre Cutback, in the CYSF office.

Yielding to an outcry (Hurrah!)

With foot placed firmly in mouth, the university has reversed the decision to cut the hours of York's five libraries.

If this decision was not a direct result of the planned study-in by Osgoode students (and it might very well have been), it was indirect — the *Star*, the *Globe* and the CBC were bent on covering the study-in, and the university surely loathes bad press.

Bravo! to the Osgoode Legal and Literary Society, which in opposing the cut in hours by organizing the study-in has proved itself the only activist student union at York.

Others, particularly the central council (CYSF) copped out on their responsibilities by not following a similar course of action.

Alas, the victory over library hours must be taken with a grain of salt. The reinstated schedule is only in effect for this term, so we can be sure that the administration will try, try, again.

Even if the libraries do maintain their current schedules, it is likely that the university will simply find (or make) other places to cut in the libraries' budget, places less visible than cuts in hours.

Eventually, we may be going to our regular-hour library, not to look for a new book, but to look for the new book and instead of leafing through computer printouts of books, we'll be thumbing through an encyclopedia - size computer printout, with the waiting list to get that one new book.

Which is just to say to Osgoode, and anyone else who is interested in maintaining or getting good library service - dust off your manuals on "How to Study - in". You might need them yet.

comment

Quebec is a nation, English Canada must adjust

By David Saltmarsh

A minor revolution in Canadian politics occurred on November 15, 1976. Suddenly the smug majority of English Canadians came to realize all was not well with Confederation. That possibly five million Canadians were not happy with the status quo. A wave of shock that bordered on horror rebounded across the country.

They had done the unthinkable, the unconceivable.

Québec had elected a Parti Québécois government.

The first question many English Canadians asked was "How could this be?" After all the P.Q. had been "crushed" in the 1973 Québec election, hadn't it?

The fact of the matter was the P.Q. had been anything but crushed. Their popular vote increased significantly, they became the official opposition in Québec. They lost one seat to the Liberal landslide, dropping from seven seats to six.

The Union Nationale suffered a tremendous defeat, dropping from 23 seats to zero. That is where the Bourassa landslide came from, not the Parti Québécois.

Many English Canadians then asked "Why would Québec want out of Confederation? Don't we all believe in our multilingual, multiracial heritage? Are we not all basically the same? English, Italian,

German, Japanese, East Indian, French? Why should the French want any more than any other ethnic group?

To the Québécois, French is more than a language, it is a way of life. Every other ethnic group in Canada shares one thing, they have adopted English as the language and culture to live and work within. Italian, Greek, Japanese, East Indians, Africans, all read English language newspapers, watch English language television, listen to English language music, and work in English.

The Québécois lives in French, reads French language newspapers, watches French language television (and Radio - Canada is anything but a translation of CBC), listens to French music and wants to work in French and be served by their government in the French language.

To be Québécois is to have a different language, culture, history, legal institutions (the Civil Code as opposed to the Common Law), religion, media and educational system from other Canadians. The Québécois constitute a nation in all aspects except one, political sovereignty.

Most English Canadians seem oblivious to this. Radio Canada is continuously referred to as "CBC Franch". Few would recognize more than one or two of Québec's

best known recording artists and television personalities.

Few know the French won a battle at St. Foy (near Québec City) in the spring of 1760, cancelling out the Battle of the Plains of Abraham (but all Québécois schoolchildren learn about this). And much of the

revelations about Québec that are front page news of the *Toronto Star* and even the Montreal English language press (the *Gazette* and *Star*) are buried on page 8 of *Le Devoir* or *La Presse*, if carried at all, because to the Québécois, it isn't news anymore.

In record stores in English Canada, Québécois artists are relegated to the 'International' sections, if they're carried at all. The separation of the two cultures is very nearly total now.

One of the most puzzling phenomena of the present situation is how Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau is looked upon as the best of the three national party leaders to lead the country at this time (*Excalibur* poll published November 3).

When Trudeau came to power in May of 1968 René Lévesque had just left the Liberal Party to found the Sovereignty Association, a small academic group debating the idea of an independent Québec. The official separatist party, the Rassemblement Indépendance Nationale (RIN) had never won a single seat in a Québec election, and public opinion polls on the question of independence for Québec were running under ten percent.

Today after eight years of Trudeau's striving for national unity there is a government in Québec City devoted to an in-

dependent Québec. How then can Trudeau be taken as a saviour of Canada?

English Canadians must realize that French Canadians are not merely Canadians who speak French. Indeed most consider their nationality as "Québécois" even though they may be devoted federalists.

Confederation must either accommodate this Québécois nation, or it will make its own accommodation in an independent Québec, maybe not in 1979, perhaps in 1983 or later.

But it will happen eventually if we do not recognize what is happening and meet this challenge. Canadians must not become complacent if the upcoming referendum on independence is defeated.

The next one may pass. The British North America Act of 1867 is not sacrosanct. If a major rewriting of our constitution is necessary, we must be prepared to undertake this endeavour. The BNA is only the latest in a string of constitutions for Canada. The Québec Act of 1774, the Constitutional Act of 1789, the Act of Union of 1849 all preceded the present constitution, adapting to changing conditions.

We may have to adapt again, to make a new confederation to accommodate the Québec of today.

I hope we as English speaking Canadians are up to this challenge.

staff meetings
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