

New Music Concerts

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 8:30 pm.

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guest performers:

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Teachers never investigated for report on racism in schools

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EXCALIBUR—Alfred Hamilton, publisher of Contrast, weekly paper of the Black community, was quoted in the New York Times as saying that "institutionalized racism affects Black Canadians as a fact of life and everyone is "aware of it". Would you elaborate on this?

HEAD—Yes. The whole structure of our society is racist in the sense that it excludes certain people. Many times it's not consciously racist. If you go to a business and you look around the office and they have executives and vice-presidents and not a single Black face, you would never see it as racist at all. It just never occurred to them to have some Blacks or Asians and that they're officer staff should not only reflect people who have the qualifications but also the racial composition of the city. This is true of the sexual composition as well. Most of the executives will be men and most of the secretaries will be women. If you tell people this is a racist kind of thing they're shocked. Part of the job is to raise the level of consciousness about these kinds of things so that people can see.

EXCALIBUR—You started a group known as the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. Why was this started and what is its function?

HEAD—I helped to form this organization and I'm still chairman of the organization. We felt that having discovered the facts that I did in my study and the incidents I told you about already that an institutional structure is necessary to do something about this. We started it to bring together people from all racial groups to see what could be done, to change the opinion and attitude in Toronto so that the kinds of overt incidents might be reduced and possibly eliminated.

EXCALIBUR—Do all economic classes encounter racial bigotry?

HEAD—Yes. My study indicated that those people who are in the upper and professional groups encounter just as much bigotry as those in the lower.

EXCALIBUR—Teachers and principals have been criticized for ignoring racial slurs within the classrooms. A report investigating this problem was said to be "too shallow". Another report condemned teachers for resisting multi-cultural activities. What is your opinion concerning these reports?

HEAD—I think the reports were well taken. I think the teachers who condemned the reports condemned them because no teachers had been interviewed. Strongly enough the report format did not call for teachers being interviewed. The persons doing the report were asked to interview parents and children in Regent Park. Teachers didn't like the findings basically because one of the recommendations was related to teachers. The report showed some teachers have permitted racial slurs to occur without action.

EXCALIBUR—Do you think the reports have helped the situation?

HEAD—I think that it has helped. Just a few weeks ago the Alliance held a meeting with the Boards of Education, the chairmen, and the directors of education for the boards. We asked them to tell us what they were doing about the problem, and this is the first time they had ever come together to talk about this. They all are doing a few things but mostly on a one shot basis — Teacher development day, classroom discussion or something like this. This won't do much good. It's going to take a more con-

centrated approach than that. This problem isn't so mild that one week you can have a speaker come in and talk about this and the next week have a speaker come in and talk about that.

EXCALIBUR—Why do so many attacks go unreported? Are they afraid?

HEAD—People are in many ways afraid to go the police. They're afraid of the hassle they'll get. I find that Blacks and Indians are reluctant to go the police about anything. They'll just take it and this is unfortunate. This is one of their responsibilities to make sure that things like this do get reported and I criticize both blacks and Indians who do not report this kind of thing. When attacks occur they ought to be known and investigated.

EXCALIBUR—You were quoted in Excalibur as saying that "I've had important job offers from government ministries which I know were attempts to buy me off." What jobs were these and who were the people involved?

HEAD—I probably should not name any names because you can never prove these things, you can only surmise because of the kind of job offer you got. I'd say these were basically from the federal government in Canada and the U.S. This is not unusual. I suspect that a good number of people have been bought off.

EXCALIBUR—Last year in Excalibur you said you were not pessimistic about racism in Toronto. Do you still feel that way?

HEAD—I'm not pessimistic yet. The major efforts are just being launched. Five years from now if we're still in the same place I might begin to get pessimistic. But not yet.

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