

Excalibur

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

editorial

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Ugly episode, ugly precedent

There is no question that certain actions and statements by the Communist Party of Canada - Marxist - Leninist (CPCM-L) members on campus since a week ago are inexcusable.

But, as a result of the members' actions, some dangerous precedents were set last week at York.

Jeffrey Forest, a part-time faculty member and CPCM-L member, without any public trial or hearing, and without being asked his side of the story, was banned from York, on pain of being charged with trespass.

We thought you were innocent until proven guilty in Canada.

Forest was refused the right to set up a literature table on Monday (even though he had a permit). On top of this, a petition began circulating calling for a campus-wide ban on CPCM-L literature.

The student council executive even recommended that Forest be fired, as well as requesting that he not be allowed access to a literature table in the future.

These are very dangerous actions indeed.

How do actions like that jive with the ideals of freedom of information and freedom of thought that are supposedly the cornerstone of Western society?

The incidents in question were the culmination of three days of heated debate in the corridors of Central Square between Forest and his organization (the CPCM-L) and students who opposed the CPCM-L's position on Zionism.

The debates involved scores of people, and on each of Thursday, Friday and Monday attracted crowds numbering between one and three hundred.

Things got ugly on Friday when a supporter of the CPCM-L brought a concealed club to the debate, a fight

broke out, and four people (three CPCM-Lers, including Forest, and one of their opponents) were arrested for assault.

Now there is no question that bringing the club onto campus amounted to a provocation, and is grounds for taking disciplinary action against the individual or individuals involved.

But it is definitely *not* grounds for revoking a literature table permit. Especially when all that exists are charges and counter-charges, with nothing taken in front of a public forum where both sides have a chance to tell their story.

The same goes for banning Forest from campus. How can that be justified when he has been accused but not convicted. The whole incident is entangled in a confusing web of conflicting accounts as to what actually took place.

Now don't get us wrong, we have no use for the explanations offered for these events by the CPCM-L.

In leaflets and articles loaded with the most trite "leftist" jargon and dogma, not to speak of slanders and downright lies, the CPCM-L has tried to defend its position. In doing so, it has done more than anyone to obscure the issues involved and discredit itself.

The CPCM-L claims that the banning of Jeffrey Forest from campus and the revoking of their lit table license, is part of a "state-organized" attack on the party, with the active collaboration of "30 or 40 Zionist goons and thugs."

The truth of the matter is that the issue of Zionism is one that stirs deeply-rooted emotions on both sides. It is a fact that in the large Central Square gatherings Thursday, Friday and Monday, there were many very vocal and emotional supporters of Zionism.

To label people goons and thugs just because they vocally oppose your particular ideology, is slanderous. If we believe in freedom of thought, then people have a right to hold whatever ideology they choose.

To further say that your opponents are agents of the state and part of a state-organized assault on "the party" is at best a bad joke.

Come on, show us the evidence. Sloganeering and dogma are cheap and easy to come by. In life all they serve to do is to isolate the sloganeers, discredit them, and lose them any public support.

And that is the point. For no matter how much their sloganeering isolates the CPCM-L for no matter what we think of the cheapness, silliness and slanderousness of their position and in spite of the absurdity of their defence of themselves, we must oppose the actions taken by our administration and those recommended by our student council executive, and the petition being circulated.

No matter how difficult the CPCM-L makes it for us, we must defend their right to propagate their ideas.

Whether or not we agree with the views of the organization we must defend their right to preach them, no matter how incongruous it may seem to defend the civil liberties of an organization that proudly idolizes one Joseph Stalin. Freedom of speech and freedom of thought, especially at a university, are precious ideals more and more stomped on in a world more and more given over to intolerant, totalitarian regimes.

As our small part in the struggle against intolerance and all that it implies, it is essential that we oppose the administration's ban of Jeffrey Forest.

The control of what information and ideas we are allowed to listen to, begins with organizations like the CPCM-L.

The precedent it sets makes us wonder where it will end.



Item: York's enrolment is down 1000 students this year.

Buttrick report could lay equality to rest

Mark it well. The recently released Buttrick report may go down in history next to the *McKeough-Henderson Report* as the bombshell that laid to rest the cherished ideal of equal opportunity for all. It is a cynical, illogical, and regressive document.

In a report to the Ontario Economic Council (commissioned and paid for by the government), John Buttrick buries the dream of equal access to post-secondary education, and comes down hard and fast on the side of the overdog.

The report is a remarkably twisted piece of logic the likes of which we have not seen since outside of a beginners' logic class. Arguing that the benefits of a higher education already go to the children of middle and upper class parents because they generally do better in school and are more likely to attend university, and since the taxes of all of the people support the universities, the poor should not subsidize the rich obtaining higher education.

Buttrick argues that such education, for which the poor also pay, is actually harmful to them because they are displaced from lower managerial and clerical jobs they would get otherwise.

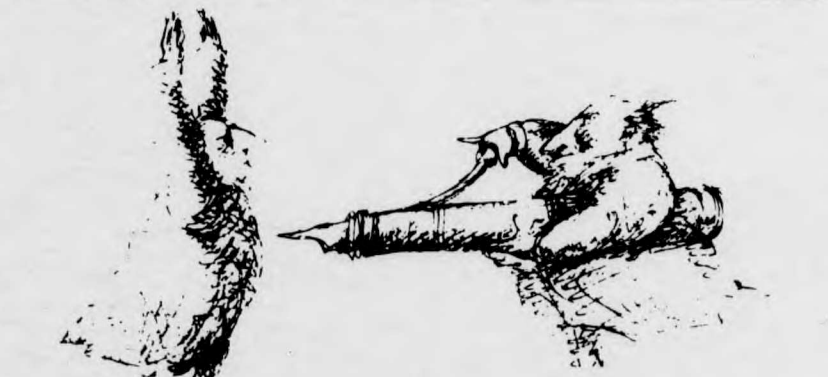
Even while admitting that the poor are discouraged from attending university because loans represent a high burden, Buttrick says we should "push tuition fees up as rapidly as it politically feasible,".... "until they cover nearly the full tuition cost of teaching."

While some socially useful individuals should get grants (what is a socially useful individual we ask, or, as he puts it, young people "who will increase the net positive externalities available to the rest of society") Buttrick says the rest of the students should get loans at "market rates".

His half-hearted suggestion that special grants be provided to "academically eligible students whose parents are poor" is buried in a hasty caution: "This last suggestion," he says, "should be guarded since there are many ways of bringing a more nearly equal distribution of wealth" which are more efficient.

And thus we are left with the scenario familiar from the *McKeough-Henderson Report*: a large number of young people left out in the cold while the scions of the upper classes will gain the benefits undisputed even by Buttrick, of a university education.

Moreover, the vision of universities being funded to the extent that are "engaged in socially valuable research and public service activities" (which, says Buttrick can be actually harmful to society) raises spectres of political repression, for what constitutes "socially valuable research"? John Buttrick's report, while paying extensive lip-service to some of the previously held ideals of universal access, only caters to a rising public sentiment against the universities.



Staff meeting today at 1 pm - all welcome

Agenda will include: the halfway party, delegates to ORCUP conference in St. Catherine's this weekend, assignments, review of the paper, how to be a bona fide staff member.

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We're not sorry

Every now and again, *Excalibur* being produced by fallible humans, prints a factual error or distortion, and it is our policy, when such a problem is brought to our attention, to print a public correction and-or apology, as soon as possible.

Some student council executive members think we owe them one. In our last issue, the lead story made much of the fact that council's budget had not mentioned that the council (CYSF) had a \$10,000 short term deposit. Our lead editorial sternly scolded CYSF for such an "oversight".

Finance vice-president Tom

Silverhart claims that according to standard accounting practice, he didn't have to mention such a deposit. According to Silverhart, such a deposit was supposed to officially appear *only* in a year-end balance sheet, but not in the budget.

Silverhart wants a public correction of what he says is our mistake.

The editors of *Excalibur* are not accountants, so we sought the opinion of well-qualified accountants and auditors. And we're sorry CYSF, but it's *your* mistake.

According to everyone we asked, every budget has a category called "cash balance forward" where one declares, essentially, what monies were not spent the year before or what assets you have.

And you can't get around it, that \$10,000 is an asset, and therefore should have been mentioned in the budget.

The funny thing is, the budget did include a "cash balance forward" section. The budget's very first line reported one bank balance of \$9,050, but nowhere is another one mentioned; the notorious \$10,000 short-term deposit. According to York's internal auditor, Jeffrey May, that \$10,000 had to at least be mentioned in a footnote.

The omission was wrong, even according to standard accounting practice.

It was also wrong ethically. Many council members were unaware of the deposit and thus approved a budget without having full knowledge of the *real* state of CYSF's finances.

There are many worthy and poverty-stricken student organizations which depend for their existence on student council financing.

It is our opinion that sometime this afternoon before the bank closes, the executive should make out a withdrawal slip for at least some of the \$10,000 and distribute the money fairly to these organizations.

We're not suggesting a wild, unplanned spending spree. We are suggesting that with a budget as tight as this year's, \$10,000 is too large a chunk to hold in reserve.