

Excalibur

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

Indians make it

Last week Roma Standefer finally won her struggle to teach a course on Canadian Indians. The victory came, however, only after her proposal had been twice rejected and after rumours of imminent student protest reached the ears of the powers that be.

By the middle of last week, the New Democratic Youth, the Young Socialists and a college tutorial studying Indians had all voiced their support of Standefer (as had several unorganized students).

Conspicuously absent from this line-up was the Council of the York Student Federation.

CYSF's lack of initiative on this issue is not untypical. We think it unfortunate that people concerned about the Americanization of this institution have had only EXCALIBUR to turn to for support; but such is the case.

First it was Gwen Matheson who came to us. Then it was Vittoria

Metelli, a student who quit sociology 343A and outlined her reasons for doing so in the newspaper. The printing of her article, plus one of our own, subsequently led to a debate in the classroom where students, through a questionnaire, overwhelmingly indicated they wanted more Canadian content.

Likewise, EXCALIBUR supported students in social science 180A when the students, themselves, brought their class to a standstill and insisted that more lecture time be devoted to the topic of U.S. domination of Canada.

Finally, of course, there was Roma. Americanization is an important issue on this campus; student and faculty activities this year bear this conclusion out. We hope that over the summer CYSF will develop a coherent long-term strategy for action on this crucial question. Mike Fletcher, in his 3-page programme has promised such "action...after publication of the (Task Force) report." We hope he means it. At any rate, we'll be watching.

Faculty screwing around

Howard Halpern has patiently been waiting since October to be told he can study in a manner which will allow this exceptional student to be as free as possible. Last week, the Faculty of Arts could have ended the matter.

When the Senate committee told the faculty they couldn't grant his petition and the faculty disagreed, they could have solved the problem by taking two possible courses of action. They could have disputed the committee's ruling at last Thursday's Senate meeting and have been successful which would have meant the petition was granted or they could have been unsuccessful in which case they have followed the second course of action and presented the petition to the committee for its consideration.

The faculty invented and followed a third option known as "screwing around". Instead of pressing for action, the faculty buried the petition and sent Dean Saywell to the committee to talk in very abstract terms about "discretionary powers" and judicial versus legislative action.

The faculty and the committee are involved in a power dispute which will eventually have to be resolved by the full Senate. This will not come before the man in the middle, Howard Halpern, has suffered through a year of doubt and possible failure.

The faculty is supposed to be looking after Halpern's best interests. What it is doing amounts to nothing. It won't challenge the committee and it won't pass the petition along.

Probably, the committee is right and the faculty hasn't the power to grant Halpern's petition. Clearly, the faculty should send the petition along to the committee so that it can be considered by the Senate at its next meeting and Howard Halpern will finally know one way or the other.

It is time that faculty councils and Senate committees stopped playing political, policy and power games and started concerning themselves with the individuals they govern.

One individual with whom they can start is Howard Halpern.

Letters to the Editor

Sea of invective

Under the disparaging head, "Teach-in Trauma," Mark Michaels, in the February issue of Masada, lets forth a sea of invective which is totally unjustified.

His target is the teach-in on Zionism and the Arab Revolution initiated by the York Young Socialists and featuring a variety of non-Zionist views. In five paragraphs, Michaels calls one of the speakers a "nut", accuses one of the teach-in organizers of being a "self-hater par excellence," ends the article with an implied swearword, accuses the York Young Socialists of playing a cheap trick, and so on.

What is behind Michael's disturbed condition?

First of all, the teach-in did not give the Zionists equal time. But it was never intended to! The teach-in organizers felt that the Zionist view gets sufficient exposure in

the activities of the Progressive Students for Israel (PSI), their paper, the daily press, etc. etc. Furthermore, the teach-in was advertised as representing non-Zionist views. No one was misled, tricked, fooled or conned. But Michaels raves.

Secondly, Michaels says the teach-in organizers didn't want to hear anything other than their lines. "As usual," he says, "the Trots (i.e., Trotskyists) had no interest in a free, equally-balanced debate." "As usual," Mr. Michaels? What about the debates between Harry Kopyto and Shalom Lappin? What about the refusal of your counterpart at the U of T to participate in debates when the Young Socialists invited them to?

Thirdly, Michaels implies the teach-in organizers played a cheap trick in announcing that two speakers from Progressive Students from Israel would participate in the teach-in. The facts are



"It's like Tricky Dick says, baby. As long as our feet ain't touchin', we ain't here!"

that the PSI did indicate it would participate, then changed its mind. At the time the leaflet was put out we were acting on the information we had: that the PSI would participate. No cheap tricks were involved. Only a late and regrettable change of mind on the PSI's part.

It is possible that Michaels did not know these facts when he wrote his article. This is understandable, even though it would indicate extreme sloppiness on his part, as well as Masada's editors. But what is totally inexcusable is the tone of his comments, descending to the level of vicious baiting, matched only by the calumnies cast forth by the Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow who he apparently opposes. It seems though, that in regard to baiting the Trotskyist movement, he finds a meeting ground with them.

Finally, it should be made known, loudly, clearly and publicly that the Young Socialists are willing to debate anyone from the Progressive Students for Israel or any other Zionist group anytime and anywhere. But let's hope that the tone of the Zionist participant in such a debate does not descend to the depths Mark Michaels plummeted towards in five short paragraphs.

Al Cappe
Organizer, Young Socialists

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Alan Glazer.

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BUSINESS AND
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ADVERTISING
Leo Smits, Jackie Stroeter

TELEPHONE:
editorial phone: 635-3201, 3202
advertising phone: 635-3800
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