

Bipin Lakhani lacks the sensitivity and impartiality essential to Cultural portfolio

After two general CYSF meetings and an emergency debate called to consider action against CYSF Director of Cultural and Social Affairs, Bipin Lakhani, nothing has been settled.

Lakhani admitted last week to using the CYSF photocopier to print 125 copies of a poster attacking Menachem Begin. He has upon request, repaid the money. Many people, including some CYSF members, have called for his resignation. It is this motion that is being debated.

The incident and the ensuing discussions have attracted many groups: represented at the meetings have been, among others, the Jewish Student Federation, the Muslim Student Association, the African Students, the Graduate Business Association, the All Student Union Movement, CUEW, several student newspapers and various interested individuals.

This crowd has posed problems for the council. Indeed, the greatest problem to date for the speakers, Tye Burt and Greg Gaudet, has been one of maintaining order during the heated debates which have ended in loud arguments, name calling and something that threatened to become a fistfight.

Impatient with procedures

No doubt, some of the problems spring from an unfamiliarity with parliamentary procedure. Many of the Third World students come from countries where politics can be a matter of life and death. However, all parties in the dispute have demonstrated impatience with the procedures that are designed to permit democratic debate. More than anything else, this indicates that most people are willing to speak out, but no one is prepared to hear them.

The arguments have ranged from the near logical to the

fanatical. Many speakers are ignoring the basic issue, choosing instead to exploit the CYSF forum for the espousal of their political opinions.

In fact, the greatest hindrance to progress has been the larger debate stemming from the Lakhani incident: Zionism is being attacked and defended, the Lebanon invasion assessed; and charges of antisemitism, racism and factionalism drop like cluster bombs on what should be an orderly discussion.

After reviewing, in earnest, the various arguments presented, it appears that there is still only one issue. And that issue has yet to be dealt with properly.

Not suitable for position

Bipin Lakhani used his position with the CYSF to promote a political ideal. And while it is not wrong to hold such an ideal—we are all entitled to our political beliefs—his use of the student council facilities for political activism runs counter to the constitution and purpose of the CYSF.

Further, as Director of Social and Cultural Affairs, Lakhani has a responsibility to remain a disinterested bystander in political skirmishes that directly affect one or more of the cultural groups that fall under his portfolio. His position requires a sensitivity that his actions indicate he is without.

Lakhani must resign his position because he is not qualified to hold it. He has forfeited the trust of some of his constituents and should be released of responsibilities of his portfolio as they are apparently interfering with the pursuit of his political ideals. Ideals which are evidently more important than his mandate as a CYSF Director.

Meeting called to discuss York student activity fee

Keiren Smith

At the October 23 meeting of the CYSF, Pamela Fruitman announced that she is calling a meeting of representatives from all of York's college councils to discuss the possibility of establishing a student activity fee at York, to fund CYSF and the councils.

Under the present system of funding, York's administration collects a fee of \$49.00 from each student's tuition. Students are not told that they are paying this fee, which is called a "per capita operating grant". Legally, as the money is a "grant" the Administration is under no obligation to "grant" the money to the councils by any set time. The money is held in a bank account collecting interest, until the Administration distributes it to the various recipients. In order to survive

financially until that time, the student councils must borrow from the University Courtesy Account.

According to Fruitman, the Board of Governors, which is responsible for York's financial policies, "does not want to be in the middle" between the students and the administration. The Board cannot offer any solutions or authorize any changes policy until a consensus has been reached with all councils and an application has been made to the Student Relations Committee, which acts as a liaison between the Board and York students.

Fruitman emphasized that all student councils had been invited to this meeting. "The Board of Governors won't accept CYSF's voice as being the only major voice."

Two amendments defeated

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creative solution would be to ask for his suspension or a public letter of apology," said Weston.

The Council defeated Weston's amendment that Lakhani "be asked to resign exclusively on his expenditure of Council funds for reasons not within his mandate."

The Board of Governors representative, Pamela Fruitman, argued that Lakhani's appointment was not made in accordance with the CYSF constitution, and therefore "He doesn't hold the position legally."

Her argument was not accepted by the Council.

Another amendment that would have Lakhani resign if he refused to write a letter of apology was also defeated. The amendment had been proposed by Winters College representative, Darren Chapmen, and Director of Women's Affairs, Judith Santos.

Pearlman urged Council to "defeat the amendment. A public apology could only perpetuate Lakhani's going on here...The basis of the first motion is that the Director of Social and Cultural Affairs had not acted in the best interest with what Bipin Lakhani has said, but I, as we all must, defend his right to say it.

Danny Eisen, a member of the Jewish Student Federation, said, "As a constituent of this Council, I don't believe apologizing will rectify the loss of confidence in the Director of this Council."

FACULTY FOCUS

North attacks regime

Kevin Fine

"Intense bloody repression" are the chilling words used by Liisa North to describe the existing situation in El Salvador. North, an Associate Professor of Political Science at York, is the author of *Bitter Grounds*, a book that chronicles the events that led up to the current Salvadorean civil war.

North states, "The war is a stalemate. The government opposition continues to argue for negotiations. Moreover, the number of assassinations and people killed just has not diminished." She does not foresee that the situation will improve. "Since the Salvadorean elections of March, 1982, the regime in power has been even more reactionary than the previous ruling body, the Christian Democrats."

North feels that Canada could do a great deal more to improve the situation in El Salvador: "Canada could play a much more forceful role by openly pushing for negotiations." She adds, "The social and political practices existing in El Salvador would be totally unacceptable in Canada. In El Salvador there are human rights violations which are almost inconceivable."

A big problem in North America is the public's lack of interest. There is only a small population of Latin Americans in North America and North feels, "As Latin American communities grow, social and political interest in the events going on in those countries will increase."

North draws her beliefs from a varied background. Born in Finland, she grew up in Latin America before moving to New York. She earned an undergraduate degree in French Literature from Boston University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley. North, who attended Berkeley during the time of the radical 60's movement, says, "It was a very exciting time." North came to York in 1971 as a Political Science lecturer. She also serves as the Deputy Director of the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC). This research group has organized major projects in Ecuador, Mexico, Brazil and Chile. North is currently researching a book of her own on Ecuador. North really enjoys York and all her duties. However, she does state, "I'm under a great deal of pressure when I'm combining administrative responsibilities with undergrad teaching, graduate supervision and trying to do research at the same time."

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