

# Excalibur

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

## Generally it's a reform-minded pudding



... 19.5% voted

## On academic racism at York University

The phrase 'academic racism' has appeared with increasing frequency during the past two weeks in reference to those involved in the campaign to de-Americanize Canadianize York.

Do not be deceived.

It is not racism to describe the manifestations of Canada's colonial position as they occur in York and other Canadian universities.

We talk of York as being a branch plant university — we do not say that every American professor is a U.S. imperialist.

We have pointed to three major manifestations of York as a branch plant of U.S. scholarship:

— the hiring, past and present, of overwhelming numbers of U.S. professors, and the implicit assumptions about the nature of 'well-qualified' and 'academic excellence' behind such hiring policies.

— the fact that, in general, there is only a token attempt being made by York's professors to filter what they are teaching through the Canadian culture, history, and experience.

— the fact that many professors, Canadian as well as American, are apologists for Canada's colonial position.

This is not the stuff of racism.

EXCALIBUR is focusing on an important Canadian social problem which Canadians must solve if they do not want to be digested by the hungry American eagle.

Those who cry 'Nazi' are demonstrating their intellectual adolescence.

It is they who are the racists, directing all their attention on the cases of individual U.S. professors in a sloppy attempt to divert Canadians from dealing with a social emergency.

Their impotence reveals itself at every turn.

With their eyes fixed directly on the undeniably misshapen percentages of foreign faculty, they tell us to wait for 10 years until Canadian graduate schools have produced enough qualified Canadian teachers.

Can they take the next logical step and do everything possible to ensure that York's graduate schools are trying to deal with Canada's social emergency by seeing their primary responsibility as training Canadian scholars?

Does not our cultural position demand that the applications of Canadian graduate students be given preference over foreign applications, for at least the next 10 years?

We regret to report that their answer is no.

In a straw poll of the directors of six graduate programs in the faculties of arts and science, none would say that Canadian applications should be given preference.

Why not?

Well, obviously it would be 'academic racism' to discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, colour — or nationality.

So rest easy, students of York.

After all, it's THE CANADIAN WAY.

The proof of the pudding will be in the eating.

That's why it is difficult to make more than general observations and comments on the results of Tuesday's election for the 1970-71 election.

To all appearances, 19.5 per cent of the York electorate elected a council which contains a majority of people who will be activist reformers in fulfilling their duties.

More important, the new CYSF shows promise of being able to function largely as a team on the major issues that are now facing students in the York community.

Evidence for this rests in the similarity of the issues raised during an all-too-short election campaign. Not that the new councillors took the same stands on the issues, but rather in the issues they raised.

These ranged from such bread and butter issues as the unfair parking policy and the awful food service to the weightier, longer-range issues of the Americanization threat at York and the present futility of existing student participation in this university's government.

Furthermore, it appears that most members of the new CYSF are eager and prepared to start working on these issues immediately.

Unfortunately, the new council must face up to a very real difficulty in making student government work at York to effect change.

The solution to the problem lies in distinguishing between the real and perceived power relationships within York University and how that has affected the development and activities of central student government here.

The official line from the board of governors and president is that York is essentially a decentralized operation. The university is based on the college system which is coordinated under a fairly weak central administration.

The reason for operating on the college as the basic unit is humanitarian, we are told. The college, according to their theory, is supposed to do a moderately successful job of fighting alienation among the student community.

In the smaller units, students are supposed to be able to get to know more people — faculty and students — faster and in more depth. The

university based on small college units will largely avoid the tremendous communication problem inherent in a centralized multiversity, we are told.

In reality, real power at York — hiring and firing of staff, admissions, course content, budget allocation, parking — is centralized. This centralization exists because the board of governors and their administrators in the Ministry of Love realize that they would quickly lose their power to real, semi-independent college units.

However, the college system is an extremely useful mechanism to inhibit and prevent attacks by a unified community on centralized government.

By encouraging the myth that this campus is based on a number of small semi-autonomous units and that you should concentrate your efforts for change or whatever in them, they effectively work against any form of viable campus-wide organization.

That, according to a York graduate-turned-business systems analyst is also the main cause of the widespread apathy here — another extremely useful mood for a centralized administration that doesn't want to be meaningfully scrutinized and criticized.

This state of affairs has been the biggest stumbling block to the development of an effective campus-wide student council. . . also potentially the most logical critic of the administration.

OK, so what if this analysis is acceptable? What use can it be put to by the new CYSF?

An understanding of where the power in this university really lies and why the myth of college power is perpetrated is essential to successfully directing efforts for reforms at York.

In one sense, this means calling a long-needed end to the wasted efforts at making a phony federalism work. Hassling with the largely superficial interests of the individual college (council) should not be the emphasis of CYSF.

Informing and organizing students on a campus-wide basis to fight for their interests as people in the same dehumanizing degree mill is where CYSF must be at.

Enough said for now. The proof of the new CYSF pudding will be in the eating over the next 12 months.

## Excalibur

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