

EDITORIAL

Why is it that York news always seems to reach the Toronto Star, CityTV, the CBC and other off-campus media before York's student press ever hear about it?

Are we always the last to know or is it just an honest oversight?

Case in point: PM Brian Mulroney is coming to campus this morning to address a small number of business students in the Administrative Studies building. How many people knew about this? Very few.

Well, don't be surprised. *Excalibur* didn't know about it either until last minute. We didn't know Mulroney's agenda, what room he would be speaking in, or even the exact time he was going to be on campus — until the Friday afternoon just before the weekend. And we had to confirm this by making calls to some unlikely sources: CUPE union offices on campus.

This is what happened.

Excalibur made a work request to Physical Plant, but was told the work could not be done right away. In fact, we were told in passing that it would have to wait until after the Prime Minister's visit because they were too busy making York look beautiful: replacing light fixtures, cleaning up garbage, repairing broken tiles, etc.

(It's always nice to get some cosmetic and maintenance work done, especially done in a hurry. We should have heads of state visit our campus more often.)

That's right! Physical Plant — the folks in the brown workpants — electricians, plumbers, carpenters, masons. Now, these guys really know what's going on.

We believed the communications department was responsible for liaising with the media on behalf of the university. But they had no comment on the affair; surely they must have known about it — who else would have liaised with the external media about an event on York campus?

Instead, we were advised to speak to the Administrative Studies Dean's office to try and accredit ourselves so that we wouldn't be left out of the media-stereo-hyped-action. (Just think how often the Star must have to chase down an invitation to report news?)

"Hi, we're a newspaper, and we're wondering if you could help us fulfill our mandate. That's right, all we need is to be present when news happens, and heck! we'll report the damn thing."

This kind of notice (or lack of it) doesn't give student press (which doesn't have the resources of a daily newspaper) a lot of time to mobilize its news staff. Or was the intention to exclude the student press altogether? It wouldn't be the first time campus media was undervalued and overlooked by both politicians and our own administration.

Certainly, there is a security aspect to the whole event, but why such extreme reticence around Mulroney's visit?

We were told that the university could not officially announce Mulroney's visit until his press secretary had done the same. Yet, par for the course, press accreditation for this "unofficial" visit had been organized days ahead.

Students at large were to be spared any advance warning about the PM's visit. Access to see Mulroney was limited to business students and faculty. Even the business students, themselves, held a lottery to choose who would be admitted to Mulroney's presentation.

The whole event was produced to remain low-key. This would allow the PM a quiet entry, a short, uncomplicated talk and a quick exit with a minimum of any student agitation over Mulroney's federal policies, including the GST on books and the sabre-rattling of External Affairs minister Joe Clark about imminent war in the Gulf.

However, we hear there's going to be a demonstration awaiting Mulroney on Monday morning.

Where did we hear it? On the grapevine, of course.

EXCALIBUR

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Excalibur is York University's community newspaper. We publish twice-weekly, and distribute across York and Glendon campuses and various locations within the North York community.

Excalibur is an autonomous corporation with a mandate to inform, educate and provoke thought among York University's diverse population.

The distinct opinions and articles appearing in *Excalibur* constitute our collective voice. However, they belong first and foremost to the individual writers and are not necessarily shared by any other *Excalibur* staff or board member.

Final editorial responsibility is retained by the Editor-in-chief.

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LETTERS

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of *Excalibur* staff or directors. However, letters judged to be racist, sexist or libellous by the editor will be refused. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

Can you say extremist?

To the editor,

RE: opinions expressed by Faisal Kutty, "US, UN and Israel: double standards," October 24, 1990 issue.

In referring to the crisis in the Persian Gulf, Kutty states: "This regional problem could have been solved by the Arab League and/or the Muslim states themselves." First, the Gulf crisis is *not* a regional problem as Kutty so misguidedly and conveniently dismisses it. It is an *international* problem with *international* implications.

Second, Muslim-Arab countries are notorious for their "here today, gone tomorrow" alliances and their inability to achieve consensus on *anything* beyond their visceral hatred of Israel. (Save Morocco, Egypt and Turkey, flickering lights in an otherwise dark tunnel.) Given this, does anyone with a shred of reason or with even a superficial knowledge of this region's recent history really believe that the Arab League could either through diplomacy or firepower, solve this problem on their own? Kutty's ignorance of international geopolitics is stunning — and it gets even worse.

He goes on to say that . . . "Arab and Muslim states would not have allowed Sadam to take over Saudi Arabia because of its religious significance . . ." You don't say, Faisal. What, pray tell, would they have done? Sent him nasty letters? Dispatched local chapters of the "Dear Saddy" fan club in

protest? Or dispensed with the usual bluff and bluster in order to mount a unified show of military force? Unlikely, especially in light of Saddam's recent revelation that he is on a first name basis with none other than the Prophet Mohammed. Talk about connections!

On a more onerous note, Kutty, in referring to Israel, twice uses the phrase "illegal occupation of Palestine" yet fails to define "Palestine." It doesn't take much reading between the lines to deduce that Kutty's use of "Palestine" not only denotes the Occupied Territories (West Bank and Gaza) but Israel proper as well. Otherwise, why the choice of a word so ambiguous in meaning? In other words, in a stellar example of what it means to lack the courage of one's convictions, Kutty deliberately employs vague language to hide his belief that the state of Israel has no right to exist. Can you say *extremist*? That's a nice word, *extremist*. Can you say *hypocrite*? I knew you could.

Kutty questions the democratic character of the U.N. Someone should take this troubled soul aside and give him a crash course on the workings of the U.N., emphasizing its democratic character. That's more than can be said for many of its member countries — Muslim and Arab states among them — who are only too happy to practice democracy at the U.N. but not at home. Talk about double standards, talk about hypocrisy!

And why this constant use of the terms "West" and "Western" as if they were four letter words? Kutty needs to be reminded that he lives in a *Western* country and studies at a *Western* university. Kutty's letter is itself an irony: in how many of his beloved Arab or

Third World countries is freedom of speech permitted? Biting the hand that feeds you, Faisal?

You want to talk double standards? Try this one: When Israeli security forces shoot Arab rioters who are stoning Jewish worshippers, the response from the Arab world is predictable. When Iraqi soldiers run roughshod over Kuwait, the response of the Arab world, with a few exceptions, ranges from meek acceptance, to apathy, to outright approval. Why is the silence of the Arab and Muslim world so deafening when Muslim-Arabs commit atrocities on their fellow Muslim Arabs?

Finally, I strongly object to Kutty's incessant criticism of the United States and Great Britain, two democratic stalwarts that have been in the forefront of facing up to Saddam Hussein. However, given Kutty's blatant anti-Western bias, this comes as no surprise. There is no gun to your head Kutty. If you don't like it here in the West, LEAVE. Or at the very least, spare us any more of your brilliant philosophies.

Sincerely
Asher Levy

Agreeing with Kutty

To the editor,

I agree entirely with Kutty's opinion, (U.S., U.N., and Israel: double standards, Oct. 24) on double standards employed by the West against the peoples of the Third World.

One needs only to look at the present situation in the Middle

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