

# Insensitivity leads to subtle racism

How easy it is. How easy it is to sit on our "multicultural" seat and hide behind the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Almost every day we are reminded, by the media, of the racist policies of South Africa and the rampant racism in the United States. What we don't think about is racism in our own backyard.

Yesterday was anti-racism day and maybe we should stop for a minute to think of why such a day is necessary in Canada.

From the treatment of Native peoples to racism in our educational system, we must face reality - Canada is not a racism free society.

On the contrary, racism, if anything, seems to be on the rise.

No, stores are not hanging "whites only"

signs in their windows, nor are social clubs advertising exclusive membership policies, but racism is still prevalent in our society.

A newspaper owner distributed a memo to staff telling them not to give so much coverage to "jewish issues". Native people were stoned by protesters. A university professor tried to prove blacks are inferior. A school trustee said his province should encourage only those with judeo-christian backgrounds to immigrate to Canada.

These are just a few of the high visibility incidents of racism in Canada. However, we should not sit back and pat ourselves on the back for society's general condemnation of these actions.

Racism isn't always visible. Perhaps the

most dangerous forms of racism are those we don't see.

We must understand the incredible pressure and subtlety of racism today.

We must acknowledge that racism does exist, not just in individuals, but in the system.

An important step in fighting racism is sensitivity. We must be ever vigilant in our treatment of "norms" and make an extra effort to be aware of the stereotypes we help create and the messages we send.

We at the Gazette must admit to our failure to make this extra effort. Last week, for the Week of Reflection, an artistic piece appeared on or cover representing "every woman".

Clearly "every woman" was not repre-

sented. Without realizing it we sent out a subtle message. "Every woman" was represented by a white woman.

Surely, nothing would have been taken away from the artistic value of the cover picture if every other face was a person of colour.

The lesson learned from our mistake will not be forgotten. Hopefully others in our community will also learn the lesson. We can not afford to be insensitive

We must do more than be intolerant of blatant racism. We must make a special effort to make all peoples, from all cultural and historical backgrounds comfortable in every aspect and level of our society.

Alex Burton

# Intifada and gulf crisis not linked

by Amir Nevo

This is in response to the article "Israel and Gulf Crisis Linked" (Nov. 1, 1990). Paul Webster, who wrote the article, seems to be confused on the issue, by his own admittance, so hopefully this will clarify the FACTS for him.

Firstly, after reading through three-quarters of the article, I still didn't see the link between Israel and the Gulf. This article seems to be more of an attack of Israel's handling of the Intifada situation, therefore I will respond to it this way. I find it amazing how people are so quick to criticize Israel at any opportunity. In 1981, Israel attacked Iraq, bombing a nuclear reactor under construction, and quickly the world scolded Israel;

yet if this was not done, then Saddam Hussein would not just be threatening the existence of Kuwait, but of the entire world, with his would-be nuclear weapons.

As for the incident on the Temple Mount, again the world is quick to criticize Israel without knowing the facts. On Oct. 8, several hundred Palestinians organized themselves to go to the holiest place in Israel (the Western Wall) on the high holiday of Sukkot. Knowing that thousands of Jews would be there praying on that day, they climbed the 10-storey wall and proceeded to launch boulders down onto the worshippers! Soldiers on the scene had little choice of action in the matter. The time it would have taken the soldiers to reach the Palestinians, there would

have been many Israeli deaths. The soldiers were there to protect the worshippers and they did exactly that.

As for the settling of Soviet Jews in the West Bank, less than 1% of all Soviet immigrants have settled in this area (not all or most of them, as Mr. Webster suggests). No government housing will be constructed in these territories either.

In 1967, there was the Six-Day War. Israel was attacked by Arab armies, and consequently took the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. This was not by choice, however. Israel was attacked, and was not the aggressor. The occupation of these territories was an act of self-defense. Since then, Israel has far from oppressed the Arabs living in these territories.

Israel built hospitals, universities, roads, given them the right to vote and much more. This is hardly the oppression that the media portrays, and what Israel has done for the Palestinians is by far more than their Arab brothers have done for them (which is absolutely nothing). The Palestinians were fine until Arafat started up his Intifada propaganda machine. In fact, before the Intifada, Palestinians had all the rights of Israelis (with the exception of serving in the Israel Defence Force), but now, with imagery of Palestinian children throwing stones at armed Israeli soldiers, the PLO propaganda is working.

The incident on the Temple Mount was a ploy to get the Intifada issue back into the spot-

light. This proves that the Intifada really has nothing to do with the Gulf situation. The plan worked, but at what cost? The loss of 21 lives. This is certainly terrible, yet when examining the fact, any other course of action would probably have resulted in far more casualties.

The entire Intifada situation is very complicated, and one can not put all the blame on one side. A compromise must be reached, yet first both sides must sit down together. Israel is ready and has been for almost two years. It is up to the Palestinians to do their share in attaining a resolution to the issue. Once both parties will meet at the bargaining table, then the issue has a much better chance of being resolved.

## Gas Masks and M-16s

To the editor:

I must begin by saying well done Alex Burton and Paul Webster for bringing up an unbiased but yet frighteningly true picture of the Gulf crisis in their articles "Canada shouldn't follow the U.S." and "Israel and gulf crisis linked."

It is heartening to see some thinking Canadians not being misled and misinformed about the crisis in the Persian Gulf unlike the obvious Tory government. What is really sickening to digest is the mere fact that the Prime Minister and his eager scouts are so ignorant and short-sighted when dealing with situations (be it internally or internationally) which require firm but good judgment.

Furthermore, these people in the government have to realize when to stop being the yes-men of the U.S. Joe Clark's announcement to go to war, even before any UN resolutions are made, clearly shows plain brainlessness. It simply portrays that Canadians can be dragged around like lost puppies. Now the question arises, where is this sudden enthusiastic cry for military actions against "dictatorship" when Palestinian women and

children are brutally murdered in their own land by the Israeli regime? When black Africans are slain in South Africa by the white minority? And, where was this cry for war when thousands of Chinese students were killed in Beijing two years ago? Just because the U.S. does not care to take strong actions on these crises, does not simply mean Canada's peaceful foreign policy must suddenly be changed to obediently follow the U.S. stand.

U.S. interests in the gulf is clearly wanting to regain its control and monopoly power in the oil industry. What the Bush administration is preaching about peace and installing humanitarian rights in the gulf region is just a bunch of garbage talk. If that (peace) were really the case, why are there not any similar measures being taken against Israel and the killings of Palestinians.

Those politicians in the government do not realize the extent of this "going to war decision". The people who are directly involved in the gulf are not playing with water pistols and rubber bands. And, I do not believe that their families are prepared for their sons and daughters to be killed in a war instigated by these blind politicians. Is the economy stable

enough to spend tax money on war when we are concerned with GST, cut backs in education, rising economic deficit and the possibility of political turmoil in the country?

If the Americans are craving for war, let them go to war. And, if the politicians in Parliament in Ottawa want to go to war, buy them M-16s and gas masks and send them to war. But, please do not poison the whole nation for something we do not believe in. So people in Ottawa, have a life...have a stand!

Fadzil Manap  
for Maritime Muslim  
Student Assoc.



## LETTERS

### Trela la la la

To the Editor,

The logic, or illogic, to be more precise, of your correspondent, P. Trela, (Gazette Nov. 15) defies credibility.

We are told; "If safety was the most important issue for the Palestinian children (who are being shot or beaten to death by Israeli soldiers), they should stay home." The Palestinian children, if P. Trela cares to know, are rising in protest against an illegal occupation of their country that has persisted, in defiance of repeated U.N. resolution, for over 23 years. An occupation that has demolished their homes, uprooted their trees, imprisoned and tortured tens of thousands of their men and women, young and old, without charge or trial, expelled their doctors, journalists, lawyers and student leaders from their country, closed their universities and schools for three years, imposed collective punishment on their villages and refugee camps and violated international law and every article of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The brutal

practices of this illegal occupation have been condemned by Amnesty International, the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, the Israeli League for Civil and Human Rights, the American National Lawyers Guild, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Red Cross and virtually every international human rights group.

Yet, P. Trela tells us that we should not expect her/his pity for these children, who are demanding to be free of occupation and to have the right to go to school and live free as all human beings. Palestinian children do not need or want P. Trela's pity. They, and the entire Palestinian people, supported by all compassionate free people in the world, are resisting an illegal occupation as all people are entitled to do.

If the leaders of the U.S.A., and Canada, cared for international law and human rights, they would be demanding, not only the termination of Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, but also the Israeli occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese land, instead of supporting funding of Israel's illegal, oppressive and brutal occupation.

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