MORE LETTERS

Cry Freedom — A Pathetic Movie

Re: Brent Doberstein's letter "Movie Review Missed Mark" (*Gateway*, March 8, 1988)

What really perplexes me is how anyone could seriously consider writing in to defend such a hopeless, pathetic movie as *Cry Freedom*.

The writer of this letter has taken great pains to blast Rosa Jackson for very fairly complaining that this stupid, incoherent movie concentrates on the "re-education" of white liberal Donald Woods through painfully obvious and dishonest means, instead of focusing on Stephen Biko, the murdered black activist who is only represented trivially in the film.

He fails to recognize that the trivialization and conceptualization of the entire anti-apartheid struggle by this movie is indeed the real problem. It will not "change the way people think" any more than a Mr. T. advertisement for Shakespeare would encourage ghetto kids to take up classical literature.

Doberstein's comment that no possible statement could be made from a movie that "concentrates solely on Biko and thus ends with Biko's death" besides the belief "that opposition to apartheid is dead as well" gives me a good indication on where he stands on the perception-o-meter — about rock bottom. Yeah, pal, and *Gandhi* was a sex farce. Learn how to read what a movie is *really* telling you. *Cry Freedom* had a great chance to stir the masses to action, but because of its simplistic overtones, it completely fails. *Gateway* readers who aren't wearing Doberstein's rose-colored glasses will recognize that.

Jaie Laplante

Conflict of Interest

I've been recently disturbed with the way the elections have been going. I realize that a person cannot keep all of their promises made but when they deceive themselves along with potential voters, this causes me to think. I have heard that the Together Slate has three members that are in the fraternity system or have been chosen to be affiliated with one. For their own reasons, due to the elections, they have tried to hide this affiliation. Chris Welsh, an active DU, Charles Vethan has pledged Phi Delt and Paul Lange has shown interest in the Deke fraternity and I've been told still holds this interest. They have all publicly denied these affiliations, saying they were a non-fraternity slate. Since 50% would represent a majority, wouldn't this mean they were in fact a fraternity slate? Does this denial represent what might occur in the future if elected to the SU; will they in turn deny their duties in the SU when it is no longer convenient?

J.J. Mandel

Ashamed of My Province

When the Keegstra affair took place a couple of years ago, I was put into the unfortunate position of feeling ashamed of my province. Friends from other parts of the country asked if Alberta was really like that — if ignorant, red-necks made up our population. They couldn't conceive of a Canada where blatant fascism could be given credence by any but the most simple-minded; a Canada where bigotry and bias could reign, unchecked by common decency.

I've just come across a number of posters promoting the "Tailgunner Joe" platform in the upcoming student elections. Needless to say, there is in fact no such platform — the perpetrators have just taken advantage of the election to (anonymously) spread their views.

The posters support a slate, led by the infamous U.S. Senator Joe McCarthy, which includes some of the most vituperative proponents of right-wing fanaticism. Other aspects of the poster leave its producers wide open to a series of libel suits (had they the courage to sign their names), using the best McCarthyist tactics, such as unsubstantiated allegation and unjustified opinions, to slander contenders for various positions.

I'm on staff here, and won't be voting in the elections. However, I reserve my right to protest such examples of the worst kind of hate literature in my role as a human being, and as a citizen of this province.

It is sad to see that such views still exist. One would think that a university education would at least open the minds of such unfortunates to the fact that not everybody shares their ignorance. Perhaps a Political Science course would help. At least they might then be able to tell the difference between a "Communist" and an enquiring mind.

Thank you, whoever you are. I am once again ashamed of the people who make up the place where I live. I feel some pity for you, but the shame you have generated reflects on me, and on everyone else in Alberta. At least Keegstra had the balls to sign his name.

Peter McClure

"Vote NO" Pitiless Attack

Over the weekend , I was shocked by the "Vote NO" posters that appeared all over campus. These posters seem to be nothing more than a smear campaign against presidential candidate, Paul LaGrange.

I was in council the night LaGrange seconded the motion to hold a referendum. The reason to hold a referendum is to let the students decide if they want to fund this program. By seconding this motion, Paul LaGrange is asking students to decide, NOT deciding for them.

Derek Hatch

Refugee Support Group Not Slate-backed

As members of the Student Refugee Support Group (SRSG) we would like to clarify confusion that may have been caused by the "No" campaign posters. Never, at any time, has the WUSC Student Refugee Support Group been affiliated with a Students' Council candidate of Slate campaign. This includes Paul LaGrange. The Student Council voted in favor of allowing a referendum to be held on our proposal — that the University of Alberta sponsor a student refugee, in order to allow the students to decide whether or not to support a fee levy. The motion to hold a referendum was supported by a great majority of the Students' Council, not just Paul LaGrange. And in supporting this motion these individuals were not necessarily supporting the Yes side of the referendum issue; rather, they were recognizing the right of the entire student body to have a say in whether or not they wish to support a student refugee. Please do not allow the referendum issue to be used as a campaign issue.

WUSC's student refugee program and the referendum concerning its implementation, should be considered in its own right. We are very disappointed in those people who, knowing very well that the Student Refugee Support Group is not slate-backed but is simply a group of students concerned with the plight of students less fortunate than ourselves, would attempt to twist the real focus of the referendum issue in order to use it for their own purposes.

The issue in this referendum is whether or not the student body wishes to support a refugee student who would otherwise be unable to continue his/her studies and whose very life may be in danger. The issue is not which charity each student wishes to support. The World University Services of Canada Student Refugee Program requires the support of the student body of a post-secondary educational institution, in order to be implemented at any given university, college, or trade school. If, in the future, other University of Alberta groups choose to propose referendum questions in support of other "charities", the student body will again be allowed to choose whether or not they wish to vote Yes or No. Through a referendum the democratic process occurs in its most direct form. No politician, no slate, no one group make the decision. The voters do.

Anna Zalik
David Howarth
Glyn Thomas

"Vote NO" Stand is Mindless

Re: "No" Committee Poster

I am writing to express my dismay at the manner in which the "No" committee has chosen to state their opinion. They have used their ad campaign to launch a personal attack on Paul LaGrange, an attack which is unwarranted by Mr. LaGrange's actions.

I have dealt with Mr. LaGrange on both a personal and professional basis, and have always found him to be honest and open. At no time has he stated that he supports the W.U.S.C. Refugee Program. What he did support was the motion to hold a student referendum on the issue. In other words, Paul LaGrange has chosen to permit students to exercise their right to choose how their money shall be spent. As far as I can see, the "No" committee's postition, that students be permitted to make their own choice, is fully supported by Mr. LaGrange; yet they persist in attacking him personally.

The only conclusion which I can draw from these somewhat confusing actions is that the "No" committee is being used as a front to attack Paul LaGrange's campaign for President of the Student's Union. It is unfortunate that what should be a viable political entity is instead being used as a platform to launch a "mudslinging" campaign. Mr. LaGrange has always been open and honest in stating his opinions, but his opponents choose to hide behind a front organization. I suppose that this shows who is the better individual.

A. J. Aeustrong

I Never Worked at Copy Cats

An election pamphlet that was illegally circulated last Friday stated that Paul LaGrange hired his sister to work for Copy Cats. I am Paul's only sister. I do not work for Copy Cats nor have I ever worked for Copy Cats nor any other Students' Union business.

Michelle LaGrange

Election Invalid

The Students' Union election process this year is completely illegitimate, and the election should be declared invalid. The democratic process has been corrupted to the level of a banana republic; the abuses have been so flagrant that a garden-slug would think them below itself. Students are being ill-served and it is only their lack of knowledge which keeps them apathetic. Perhaps I can shed some light on the murky, poisonous fog that surrounds the election process this year.

The first point to consider is the nomination of Craig Cooper as Chief Returning Officer (CRO). There were numerous irregularities in the procedures; suffice to say that initially he was rejected in his bid for the position because of a potential conflict of interest. Members of the Nominating Committee felt that he would not be able to be impartial due to his membership with the Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

Cooper remains in a position of potential conflict of interest. He is, as mentioned above, a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity. So, coincidentally (?) are members of the Pallister Slate. It is rumoured that the people behind the "No" side of the referendum question are also members of the same fraternity.

I have no particular gripes about fraternities per se. They perform several useful functions. However, they are closed societies; one has to go through an elaborate procedure to join them. One's primary loyalty, once a member is expected to be to the fraternity. The Students' Union, on the other hand, is an open society. Everyone has to join. The Students' Union makes no claim on students' loyalty, nor should it.

If someone is in the position of having to make a decision on behalf of the Students' Union regarding actions of members of his fraternity, it is clear that he will be unable to do so in an impartial manner.

Cooper has already given students cause for concern about his suitability for the CRO position. In the Feb. 16th edition of the *Gateway*, he made several comments regarding the issues in the election. The comments themselves were innocuous; the fact that he defined the issues, or attempted to, is entirely unacceptable. A CRO has no place making political statements.

Finally, let us consider the "No" side of the referendum question. They have put up posters which barely address their position; the focus seems to be on discrediting Paul LaGrange as a presidential candidate. The referendum question has nothing to do with Paul LaGrange; why is his name on the posters? The "No" side appears to be a thinly veiled campaign to discredit him, and so represents a blatant misuse of Student Union Funds (Each side is given about $1000 — to run a campaign). These posters should not have been approved by the CRO; the fact that they were demonstrates his incompetence.

By not recognizing the potential for conflict of interest and resigning, by making inappropriate political statements and by approving totally illegitimate posters, Cooper has severely damaged the integrity of the election this year. He should resign; the election should be postponed, or declared invalid. How stupid do these people think students are?

Some students have complained about using SU funds to support "joke" slates. They needn't worry; this year, thanks to Mr. Cooper's involvement, the entire procedure is a joke.

Martin Levenson

"Vote NO" a Slam Campaign

I find it rather embarrassing to discover that there are people on this campus who waste their time, energy, and the students' money on something as cheap as the "Vote No" campaign.

I believe that the people behind the "Vote No" campaign understand this and are merely engaging in a 'slam' campaign. I find it immoral to use an issue such as the WUSC proposal as a playing field for such infantile political games. It detracts from the real issues involved in the upcoming referendum. Such mindless hacking is insulting.

Mark Cabaj