

EDITORIAL

Linking world crises

A key concept during the last couple of months has been linkage — or more accurately the lack of any. Most notably, the U.S. administration has refused over and over again to link the issue of Palestinian sovereignty in Israeli-controlled territories with Iraq's withdrawal from occupied Kuwait.

During this last week, however, another potential link has been added to current political affairs. The Soviet Union is counting on the U.S. not to link Gorbachev's military crackdown in Lithuania to either the question of Israel/Palestine or Iraq/Kuwait. In historical terms, this would be considered a small payback for Gorbachev's dismantling of the Cold War and his support of the U.S.-dominated Gulf policy.

Gorbachev has entrenched his position to weather out the harsh political climate of discontent in the U.S.S.R. He now wields more bureaucratic power than even that possessed by Stalin. He has restocked his closest advisors and hand-picked his vice-president, putting himself at the centre of control.

After five years of playing off the Western media, however, Gorbachev seems to be losing control both of the republics and of his cool image of tolerance. He has reconfigured the Soviet political and economic systems in a desperate attempt to retain stability, but by resorting to violence instead of diplomacy, he is risking the world's disfavor.

In stark, pragmatic terms, what he's looking for at this critical time is a diversion of international attention away from the U.S.S.R. and into the Middle-East while he cleans house.

Some observers are afraid that like Beijing's brutal stand against democracy during the Tiananmen Square bloodbath, the spectre of intolerant ideology and dictatorship might return to the Soviet Union. Rolling in tanks, marching on media and government buildings and closing down independent news services is hostility not pacification.

The timing of the Soviet army's move to quash independence governments in the Baltic republics is absolutely suspect. It depends on a gentleman's informal understanding. George Bush is supposed to look the other way, while scolding Gorbachev with just enough rhetoric to maintain his image as a trustworthy chief of police and guardian of the "new world order."

Obviously, Bush needs Gorbachev to scratch his soon-to-be sunburned back and to remain acquiescent with his campaign against Iraq, one of the Soviets' biggest military clients.

Lithuania seems to have been beaten into submission, but the republic has boldly decided to establish a "government in exile" to keep the dream of independence alive, even as more Soviet troops roll into the other Baltic republics, Latvia and Estonia.

Brian Mulroney has condemned the Soviet use of force and threatened to revoke \$1-billion in promised food aid in protest.

Although the world's attention is focussed on the Persian Gulf, the crack-down would not go unnoticed, he said.

In other words, there would be linkage.

Unfortunately, when George "Dumbo" Bush has begun dropping his bombs over Iraq and body counts rise into the thousands, few people will wonder what ever happened to the Baltic states' struggle for independence.



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, we will refuse letters that are racist, sexist, libellous or those which attempt to incite hatred toward an individual or an identifiable group. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

Time to take responsibility for our waste

To the editor,

Have you ever thought about what happens to all those popcans or juice bottles that get consumed and then tossed into the garbage everyday just on York campus alone? What about the paper you are reading right now? I suppose it will just get thrown into the garbage once you have finished reading it.

On average each Canadian household generates approximately one tonne of garbage each year. That is a million tonnes in Metro Toronto alone. By throwing out all your garbage, you are wasting valuable resources and using up landfill space that is becoming increasingly scarce and difficult to replace.

Since we all produce garbage, we are all part of the problem. But we can also be part of the solution. What is York doing about recycling? I don't see blue boxes anywhere around the campus do you? Ultimately the thousands of individual decisions we make every day at work, at school and at home will shape the future of our planet.

School boards have a tremendous opportunity to make a positive difference. Boards make use of a vast array of goods and services and are comprised of large numbers of voters, taxpayers and consumers. By considering the environmental impact of their purchasing and operating policies in accordance with certain ecological principles, boards can work towards improving both local and global environments.

Have you ever walked around the various computer rooms in the Steacie building? The vast quantities of wasted computer printouts that just get thrown away is sickening. If we all had to pay for each sheet of paper we used we would certainly

think twice about making those 10 extra printouts just for the heck of it.

Recycling this large amount of wasted paper and the many other college papers that are published, read and then thrown away every week could help to save a valuable natural resource.

Did you know that recycling just one ton of newspapers saves 17 trees and also a great amount of energy? I don't even want to think about where all those old flyers that get ripped off the bare walls each week get disposed.

What about the cafeterias and the many egg cartons and glass jars and styrofoam containers that are used up each and every day. I personally find it horrifying that all this is being thrown into green garbage bags and just forgotten about once it leaves your hands.

I cannot even begin to imagine the amount of food leftovers that must be tossed out every day. Just think of all the coffee grounds that Tim Horton's must go through in a day. All of these grounds, egg shells, food scraps and vegetable peels could be turned into a soil conditioner for the various gardens and flowerbeds located on the campus. A compost pile could be implemented somewhere out there I'm sure because York certainly has enough vacant land space.

Throwing things in the garbage is just a habit, a bad habit. The time has come to take responsibility for the waste we produce and start forming good habits. Let's make the three R's (reduce, reuse and recycle) a part of our everyday vocabulary at York.

Anita Litner

Smokers can't read

To the editor,

I don't know if anyone else has noticed this — it's hard to tell through all the smoke — but no one obeys the

No Smoking signs in Central Square and surrounding areas.

This childish rebellion against authority is only emphasized by the fact that these people like to light-up directly underneath the signs. Perhaps their habit has impaired their vision in some way and they can't see the signs. Or, maybe they have a thousand dollars for the fine, that they're just dying to give away.

My point is that smoking occurs near major entrances that I, and many others, use and we should not have to avoid these areas so that others can break the law.

What more can we do to make people follow the rules? Empty smoke police?

Tracy Burk

No shortage of smokers

To the editor

Could someone please tell me who enforces by-laws here, on this campus.

No-Smoking signs seem to be located about every ten feet along the hallways, and are very difficult to miss, yet there seems to be no shortage of smoking smokers in these restricted areas, especially around the bear-pits and the central square "cafeteria."

Does smoking cause one to become blind or stupid? I think not.

These inconsiderate smokers are stupid naturally (blindness can be ruled out, because even though it's a struggle for them, you can sometimes see these people reading Hostess chip bags). Even though being an inconsiderate smoker (or stupid) is a disability that should not be taken lightly, it should not be considered a legitimate excuse for breaking by-laws.

As a smoker myself, I cannot understand the lack of consideration that York's smoking community has for the rest of the population.

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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 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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Excalibur staff are having their first meeting today at 4:00 pm. We'll be doing a post-mortem of the last two papers as well as assigning stories to new reporters in NEWS, ARTS and SPORTS. Drop in and meet the people who bring out your newspaper. And remember that you too could become one of the Excal gang.