

Faculty and students respond to Herzog's visit

Dear Editor:
I am writing this open letter on behalf of the 1989-90 York Student Federation, to express our extreme disappointment in the actions of fourteen of York's faculty. On July 1, 1989, this group of professors collectively wrote a letter to the editor of the *Toronto Star* and again on July 5, 1989 to the *Globe & Mail*, protesting the awarding of an Honorary Doctorate of Law Degree from York University to President Chaim Herzog of Israel.

Our association is neither for or against the President of Israel receiving an Honorary Doctorate. However, in the future we would advise these professors to remember that they are employees of York University. This means that these individuals are obligated to only voice their objections of the awarding of a degree through the proper York channels, never to air York's dirty laundry to the public!

The York Student Federation gives its full support to the authority of President Harry Arthurs, his administration and the York Senate to bestow any degree they wish. We sincerely hope that in the future York University faculty members will remember to respect that authority.

Peter Merrick
Vice-President of External Affairs
Council of the York Student Federation

Merrick discredits himself, says student

Editors:
On July 6, the *Globe and Mail* published a letter signed by 14 Jewish York faculty members with the heading, "Herzog doesn't deserve a degree."

Enter Peter Merrick, V.P. of External Affairs for CYSF. He writes a letter (aptly) to the *Toronto Sun* in which he chastises the professors for their disloyalty to York: "... in the future we would advise these professors to remember that they are employees of York University. This means that these individuals are obligated to only voice their objections of the awarding of a degree through the proper York channels, never to air York's dirty laundry in public!"

Merrick seems ignorant of the fact that the professors also have the freedom to express their views. They are Canadians, not just employees of York University. It seems he would take away the freedom of expression for the tenuous sake of preserving York's "image," something very dear to *Excalibur's* editorial writers as well.

Given that the Herzog visit was announced shortly before it occurred, Merrick's point about the "proper York channels" is meaningless. He simply wants no objections to official York policy.

Acting like President Arthurs' press secretary, Merrick adds insult to injury and completely discredits himself as a representative of York students by ludicrously declaring his full support for President Arthurs' administration "to bestow any degree they wish." Shame on the traitorous professors for defacing his majesty's royal edict.

Merrick's slavish devotion to authority is disgraceful, especially for a supposed "student leader." Indeed, the last two words are laughable in Merrick's case.

Cosmo Vecchiarelli

A communication from the Convocation Office announcing a special convocation gave very short notice to the York community that Chaim Herzog, President of Israel, was about to be awarded an honorary degree. In response to that notice 14 Jewish faculty members wrote to President Arthurs, to the *Globe and Mail* and to the *Toronto Star* deploring the awarding of this degree. We felt it was most inappropriate to confer such a degree on the head of state that was involved in continuing violations of human rights in the occupied territories; suspension of the entire educational system in the West Bank for about a year and a

half and granting clemency to Israelis convicted of killing Palestinians.

The granting of an honorary degree is a public event. When it is tied to the state visit of a foreign dignitary, it receives widespread coverage by the press. It is not some sort of quiet internal meeting. It is a political event. It accords recognition and honour to the recipient; his role as a head of state cannot be ignored. We felt it a public duty and responsibility to respond. The decision to hold this convocation was not only controversial, it also provided a platform for propaganda.

The responses to our letter in some ways are more troubling

than the decision to award President Herzog the degree. There is a terrorism of the mind that occurs. Responses do not argue the situation on its merits. The message is to be silent, the method is intimidation. Peter Merrick, Vice-President of External Affairs for CYSF "advises" us

"... that the next time you do not agree with the awarding of a degree to use the proper channels, never to air York's dirty laundry to the public!

The CYSF gives its full support to the authority of President Harry Arthurs, his administra-

tion and the York Senate to bestow any degree they wish. We sincerely hope that in the future you will respect that authority"

We would certainly agree with Mr. Merrick that the laundry is indeed dirty. But what is even worse is that CYSF would attempt to silence us. The academic community is a collegium, not an hierarchy. Our rules, procedures and channels were never meant to constrain those who disagree from speaking out.

Professor Howard Buchbinder
and 13 other York professors

Snitman questions hostility

Jewish Student Federation rep sick of "Israel Bashing"

Last month, the York community was honoured to host Israel's President, Chaim Herzog, at a special convocation ceremony, during which he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws degree. Certain persons and groups vehemently opposed this gesture. Why all this hostility towards Israel? It can only be explained by the great public deception being carried through the press, radio and television, coupled with a total ignorance of historical fact. I'm sick of it. "Israel Bashing" in the media has gone on long enough. It's time that the record was set straight.

The propaganda offensive being waged by Israel's enemies against her is simply a new tactic in the same old war — the war against the very existence of the State of Israel. It was after the Yom Kippur war of 1973 that the Arab states, together with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) came to the conclusion that Israel would not be defeated by the sword. A diplomatic and political strategy, backed up by murder made, but the over-reaction and

and intimidation of its opponents, was decided upon by the PLO and its constituent terror groups. The PLO has mastered the art of propaganda well. Fatah emissaries were trained in the Soviet Bloc, and in particular, in North Vietnam.

By the early 1970s, the anti-Israel forces commanded an automatic majority in the United Nations (UN) with the support of virtually every communist and Third World country. It was during this decade that such hideous resolutions as "Zionism is Racism" came out of the world body. "Racism?!" How could the culmination of the Jewish national movement, after two thousand years of dispersal and persecution, be said to represent hatred, discrimination and oppression? Quite simply, it does not.

Israel is a country founded on the principles of freedom and democracy, principles that she still adheres to, and which are totally alien to the Middle East.

This is not to say that Israel is perfect, that her leaders are infallible, that mistakes have not been

the bias prevalent in our media can only be explained by the success of the Arab propaganda war. When a native man in Canada spent 11 years in prison for a murder that he did not commit, it did not make the front page of the *Jerusalem Post!* There is no country in the world that would have reacted to the violence in the territories with greater restraint than Israel. Imagine what would be the fate of masked bandits who stood on top of the Eaton Centre and lobbed boulders and homemade bombs down onto Yonge Street.

Another significant result of the 1973 Arab defeat was the adoption in June 1974 of the "Ten Points for War," which included the assertion that "any liberation step that is achieved constitutes a step for continuing to achieve the PLO strategy for the establishment of the Palestinian democratic state." This simply refers to the phased plan for the total annihilation of Israel. A PLO-run West Bank state would only serve as a massive base of operations from which attacks would be mounted against the Jewish State.

Anyone who ignorantly concludes that a Palestinian mini-state could never pose a threat to Israel has only to look up in the hills north of Jerusalem. It is a four minute jet flight from the air base near Amman, Jordan to the Tel Aviv area, where over a third of Israel's population resides. Early warning radar stations in the Samarian heights of the West Bank are Israel's front line defence against immense catastrophe.

Now what about the Arab Palestinians? Are they, in fact, the victims of a terrible aggression? Consider the Six-Day War. The West Bank was taken by Israel in a defensive action, after Israel had pleaded with King Hussein not to enter the war. Instead he ordered the shelling of Jerusalem. Gaza was captured from Egypt after the fiery President Nasser again declared that the Jews would be thrown into the sea, amassed his tank divisions at the Sinai border and ordered the UN "peacekeepers" to leave. So much for international guarantees of Israel's security.

It was in 1968 that the PLO covenant was amended, declaring that "the establishment of Israel (is) fundamentally null and void" and that "armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine." But the PLO was founded in 1964, not with the goal of creating a Palestinian Arab state in the West Bank and Gaza. (after all, these areas were in Arab hands). The PLO was created for the sole purpose of destroying the State of Israel. Even today, the emblem of the PLO displays a map, not of the West Bank and Gaza, but of the entire land of Israel.

The suffering of the Palestinian Arabs is truly a tragedy, but not one brought on by anyone but the Arab states and their leadership. The confrontation states manipulated them for use as political propaganda against Israel, and the PLO continues to use assassination to rule out dissent. Far more Arabs than Jews have perished at the hands of Arab terrorists. Peace in the Middle East will only be possible if and when the Arabs accept Israel's right to exist in security.

Yassar Arafat's latest political initiative, commanding even the attention of the western governments, is no more than an exercise in doubletalk, where seeming concessions are offered in the West, only to be refuted in the Arab press. The reality is that Israel has very little room for error. The lack of a Palestinian Arab state in the West Bank is not the obstacle to peace in the Middle East. The refusal of the Arabs to come to terms with the fact that Israel is here to stay is what prevents a solution to this bitter conflict.

QUESTION & ANSWER

by HEATHER SANGSTER
and ROZANNE LACOB

1. Who is Chaim Herzog and why was he at York?
2. How do you feel about Herzog receiving an honorary degree from York?



Charles Padmore, Geography 3

1. I don't know.
2. I don't see anything wrong with it.



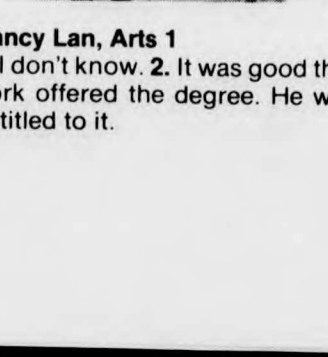
Henry Yeung, Science 2

1. I have no idea.
2. (After being told) It's good that he is here. But, he doesn't deserve a degree. He's not doing good things over there.



Jason Nolan, English grad student

1. He's the president of Israel and he was here to get a degree.
2. I feel that his visit is consistent with York. There is a close connection between York and the Jewish community. But, I don't like his visit. If we invite Yassar Arafat too, ok... but neither side is clean enough to receive a degree like that. I'm sure no one had any problems with it because it was done in the summer and no one will notice that it happened in September.



Nancy Lan, Arts 1

1. I don't know.
2. It was good that York offered the degree. He was entitled to it.



Marilyn "Gern" Garshowitz, Psychology 3

1. He's president of Israel.
2. Well, he is a person and he has a right to a degree but did he deserve it? Did he earn it?



Mrs. Johnston, York staff member and student

1. He is the president of Israel and he was here to rally support for Israel and to make their case known.
2. I guess if York wants to honor Herzog that's fine. Not everyone agrees with it. I'm sure he has his good points that are recognized as well as his bad points.