

Lebow's milk and honey dream

Elliott Lefko

Charles Lebow laughs when he recalls the day he was asked to participate in a mock mid-east peace conference held recently at York. "They picked me up in a limousine. They had a tape recorder going to capture all the conversation. It was very official.

"They wanted me for my opinion as editor of *Images*, the Jewish Student Federation newspaper. It's funny but two years ago when they had something similar to this, the decisions reached were in line with what eventually was made at Camp David. The participants take it very seriously. I'm interested in their eventual conclusions."

Lebow is the programme assistant for the JSF, a post he's held for two seasons. Among his responsibilities are *Images*, the York-Israel Connection (a Zionist group), the Glendon Campus and Outreach and Publicity.

Lebow explains how he tries to reach out: "I talk to people in Central Square and around school. I try to bring new people in. As well, I organize special programmes such as Israel Week, held last November, and last month's Jewish Awareness Week."

Hailing from Hamilton, "Ti-Cat country", Lebow attended McMaster University as a biology student. There he became active as a Jewish student activist. He was one of the founding members of the McMaster Jewish Student Federation, a student-funded and run organization that represented the 2,000-3,000 Jewish students on campus. The opportunity prepared him for his present work. "Out of necessity you do everything," he confides. "It gave me ideas on how to get people involved."

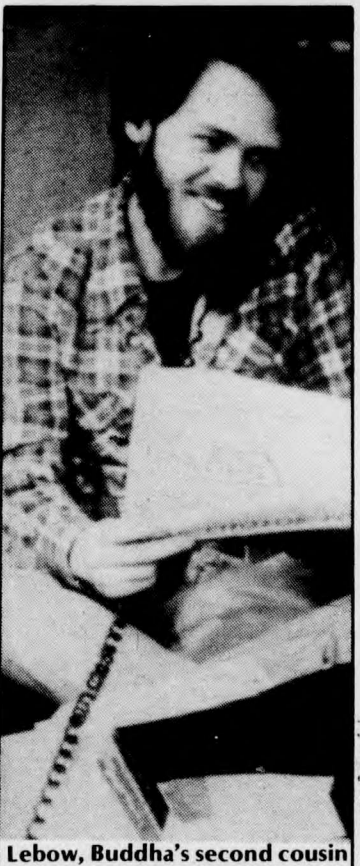
After Mac, Lebow ascended to the WUJS Institute in Arad, Israel,

for a year-round programme consisting of six months of Hebrew, Jewish and Israeli studies, and six months in his chosen field.

When he returned he found he wanted to work with Jewish students. After considering a number of offers he chose York.

Since he began Lebow has noticed some constructive changes at the JSF. There's been an increase in the total amount of people. There's also a wide variation of people involved.

From the outside, it may seem that everyone in the JSF knows each other, but really the opposite is true. In the past year they have had 25 different leaders of student programmes, each group including at least 4 different people, to make up the



Lebow, Buddha's second cousin

hundred people at the group's heart. Beyond that there is the influence of the people attending the events.

The JSF is conscious of the other small groups that give York its individualized flavour. They have sponsored programmes with groups such as the Women's Centre (last year's Bella Abzug lecture) and with ASUM, the all-student union movement. "There is a mutual respect between the smaller organizations," adds Lebow.

As this article is written, it's Passover, the Jewish festival celebrating the exodus from Egypt. Lebow is excited about this special time of year. "Every Jew will be having a Jewish experience in the next week. They will have a chance to see how they relate to their identity."

Increasingly, people from all backgrounds have begun examining their pasts. Right now many Jewish students are at a form of crossroads. They could go either way. They could forget their background or approach it. Lebow is very concerned with the possibilities.

"I want people to question themselves. To come around to reach an honest decision. Hopefully they will want to know more about themselves, and where they're coming from. I avoid guilt trips."

Recently, Vanier College announced it was planning a film festival, for next November, to examine the phenomena of Nazism. Although Lebow had not heard of the plans, he was concerned at a potentially disturbing situation. "A lot of students are children of Holocaust survivors," he explained. "It is a sensitive matter. There is actually a group, Children of the Holocaust, that analyzes the social and psychological problems resulting from the Holocaust experience."

Lebow's easy-going personality is a personal trademark, yet when I brought up the hate slogans that creep up periodically at York, he gives a wistful sigh. "The first time I walked through the tunnel and saw a slogan to the effect of 'Jews must be eliminated,' I felt personally threatened.

"Officially, we took steps to make the administration aware of the situation. To increase security, so people could walk around without feeling afraid.

"According to Canadian law, there is action that can be taken. Hate slogans are against the law, never mind the defacement of property.

"The slogans are the work of a small segment of the York population. Just the same there is

the threat of a small group dominating a large mass of society."

Last month, as part of Jewish Awareness Week, Lebow had scheduled the infamous Jewish activist Meyer Kahane, of the Jewish Defense League.

Unfortunately, the night before his appearance, Kahane was arrested and thrown in jail. Lebow sketches what could have happened with Kahane. "The reason we wanted to bring him in is because of his controversial stance. We do not necessarily have to agree with his philosophy, but at least he would have provoked people to ask themselves, 'Just why are we Jewish?'"

Challenge and provoke.

The record rack

Harder than the best-Burning Spear (Mango Records)

It's here; a must album for anyone whose roots of music lie in reggae. This 'best of' album reflects the classics from six previous Burning Spear albums, since 1975. The first cut is a tribute to the black prophet Marcus Garvey. Other tunes on side 1 include "Dry and heavy", "Throw down your arms", and a soothing melody entitled "Social Living".

A wild slice rounds out the side, "Black wa da da", a guitar and bass riff, reminiscent of the early reggae days. The next side begins with "Slavery Days", an up beat, hard hitter that is the best cut on the album. "Old Marcus Garvey" laments how no one remembers the predictions of the black prophet of the '30's. A strong horn section supports "The sun" and a spacey "Civilized reggae" rounds out this pulsating chant. Jah must buy it Man!!

A different kind of tension—The Buzzcocks (A&M)

This is the latest in the new wave revolution. Side 2, the good side, starts off with fast and angry mover, "I don't know what to do with my life" (Ha). "Money", however, is a shallow tune that lacks any meaning or melody. "Hollow inside" is another song that makes you wonder how it even got pressed. "A different kind of tension" is energetic, but that's it. The Buzzcocks do have a smash hit on this disc, "I believe", but my advice is to just buy the single if you like it.

Danny Goldberger

B-Boy

Best Boy is Back. Beginning tomorrow night, the Academy Award nominated film returns to T.O. for a run at the Bloor Cinema (Bloor and Bathurst). "We're only making plans for Philly."

Ronald Ramage

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