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Cover page of controversial first issue of Masada.

Jewish clubs accused of censorship

By JULIAN BELTRAME

Masada, the quarterly magazine of Jewish students at York and U. of T., is in danger of becoming extinct because of what Geoffrey Clarfield, the magazine's associate editor, calls an issue of "freedom of speech".

Masada's second issue this year, due to be released on October 2 was abruptly halted by a telephone call from Ben Mayer, director of Hillel Foundation at the U. of T., informing the printers that financial backing of the magazine had disappeared.

Both Hillel and the Jewish Student Federation at York, each of whom contribute \$2,100 for the publication of the quarterly, withdrew their traditional funding of the magazine following separate advisory board meetings on October 1.

"It's a typical freedom of speech problem," Clarfield said Tuesday. "You say something we don't like and we'll cut off your funds."

The bone of contention was an article on Barney Danson, federal housing minister, in Masada's first issue, portraying Danson as a Jew trying to escape his Jewishness. "The content of the article was inflamatory and very close to being libellous," said Mayer.

being libellous," said Mayer. Clarfield told Excalibur that he had contacted a lawyer who told him that nothing in the article could be shown to be libellous. "The issue transcends Danson," said Clarfield. "It makes them (Hillel and JSF) uncomfortable that we are aggressively Jewish and Zionist."

Lou Garber, director of York's Jewish Federation, denied that the withdrawal of funds from Masada was a means of dictating editorial policy or that the JSF would no longer fund a Jewish magazine.

"There remains a desire on the part of the JSF to fund a Masada magazine," Garber told Excalibur, Tuesday. "The JSF has temporarily suspended funds for the editors who are presently running Masada.

"Now we are asking the editors to meet with us and discuss the matter."

Both Garber and Mayer denied that their actions were an attempt to impose censorship on the seven year-old magazine.

"Nobody in this world is totally free," said Garber. "There's always a measure of accountability involved."

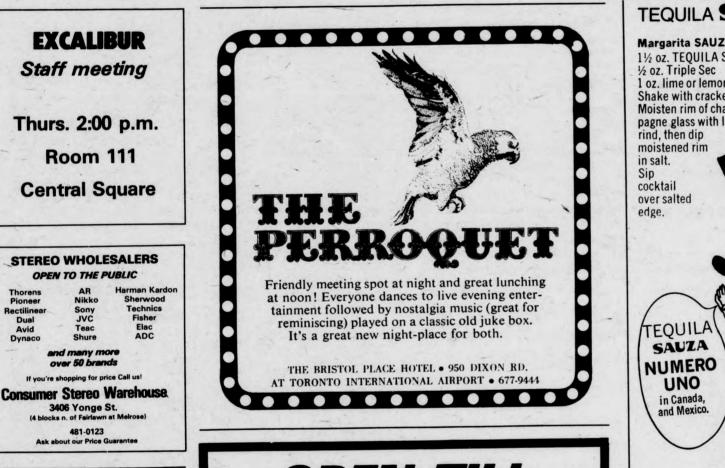
While Garber would not point specifically to the Danson article as the catalyst for the JSF's actions, Mayer said that he received many complaints from both students and the Jewish Welfare Fund, sponsors of both Hillel and JSF. But he added that he was dissatisfied with the first edition for other reasons, as well.

"We know that the product (Masada) being produced is not what we the publishers would like."

Both federation directors said that they have had no rapport with the new editors, whom, they claim, have not solicited contributions or opinions from the Jewish community.

"Previously, there existed a process by which students and Jewish organizations could contribute. Before an issue goes to print, I want to see the material and be able to talk about it with the editors, but I don't want the power to say that the material could not go in."

Clarfield told Excalibur that they had already solicited funding for the next issue of Masada and would go ahead with or without Hillel and JSF backing.



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