

Selma: I didn't say that!

Dear Editor,

I am writing to point out two errors in the article, "Petition demands retraction of Physics Journal article" by Jennifer Lim (*Excalibur*, Jan. 22/92). Firstly, Ms. Lim states that I compared the 'Freeman Article' to hate literature and said it should not remain in circulation. However, during our interview I told Ms. Lim that a socialist with whom I had spoken had made this statement. Therefore, this statement was incorrectly attributed to me. Secondly, the article states that "the petition called for the resignation of Nicholls as editor of the CJP." A careful reading of the pe-

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tion will reveal that the petition does not ask for the resignation of Prof. Nicholls but rather it states that the national Research Council which publishes CJP has not removed the editor from his position.

Your sincerely,
Selma Zimmerman,
Advisor to the University
on the Status of Women.

Victimization myth fueled

Dear Editor,

Re: "Payback, African Canadians and African Americans demand reparations for the legacy of slavery" (*Excalibur*, Nov. 6/91)

In spite of good intentions, I believe that those who support the idea of reparation payments to African Americans/Canadians as compensation for past injustices should not be counted as friends of the Black community. Rather, by adding fuel to the fire of the idea of victimization, (the idea that Blacks are solely victims of White oppression and not at all responsible for their own actions), they only further embitter the Black community and insure that they will never pull out of the violence, poverty and anger that their community finds itself immersed in. That is to say that racism should be ignored and that we should not do all that we can to keep it from not being entrenched in the laws of the land — we should, but we should not condemn a people to prolonged misery and hopelessness by telling them all their problems are results of institutional sins.

Victimization theory looks at statistics kept on the Black race as a whole (there seems little good reason to compile statistics in this manner — it only seems to heighten racial tensions and further isolate and humiliate the Black community) and preaches a gospel that says it is solely White society's fault for a high Black incarceration rate, a high rate of illegitimate births, that AIDS is some sort of White conspiracy, and that all Black criminals are by the colour of their skin, political prisoners. Leaders such as Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, preach the gospel of victimization and win much popularity, not to mention vast financial rewards.

Calling people 'victims' is an easy solution to the problems of everyday life. Tell someone that it was not their fault they stole that car, it was the pressures of a racist society which led them to it — perhaps it will win you their loyalty (as any good demagogue seeks to accomplish) but at a high cost. The cost is a embittered person, who after being fated by their skin colour, begins to believe it. A belief in victimization drives out hope and replaces it with bitterness.

I believe that, although many liberals will win popularity when they puff



Photo by Anthony Cohen

themselves up with self-righteous rage and go on their attacks against the sins of racist America, they would do better to encourage the Black community to start looking to themselves to, yes, pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Throwing money blindly at anyone doesn't improve their situation. My brother worked amongst the Inuit in Northern Manitoba. The Inuit people have been given substantial funding by the Canadian Government, to such a point that many do not work nor need to. What has resulted? An environment of misery and pain. Villages racked by suicide, depression, and alcoholism. You take away a person's self-reliance, you destroy their life. Why do people acting in the name of compassion not wake up and learn that calling someone a hopeless victim and throwing money at them is not a solution to poverty, violence or abuse, but rather a guarantee that it will continue.

Thank you,
Paul Finlayson.

Unfounded attack on YFS

Dear Editor,

A response to *Excalibur*:

When I first saw the centerfold of the Jan. 22 edition of the *Excalibur* entitled "YFS Report Cards," I was torn between two initial reactions. The first was to ignore it in recognition of the hogwash that it is. The second was to respond to the arrogant demonstration of abuse of power which the report cards display.

When I was elected as the president of YFS/FEY in March of 1991, my platform was to serve the student community at York University to the best of my abilities and to the extent that the resources at my disposal would allow. If you care to check the rest of my platform, come ask me for my poster, because the platform you put down was not one I ran on.

I have no doubt that there are students that would claim that I have not utilized the resources at my disposal in the most effective way that would serve their interests. And in some cases they are right. However, I would say that no one can accuse me of not trying to do my best and having York students best interest in mind.

Among the many things that I have learned as part of the YFS/FEY team, is that criticism and disapproval by members of the electorate are some of the inescapable consequences of holding an elected office. I accept this and consider it vital to the democratic spirit which is responsible for getting me elected in the first place. Personal attacks, however, are not.

One of the things that I was elected to do was to check the power of those within the university administration, who abuse it to the detriment of York students. Aside from my personal resentment of the arrogance of the *Excalibur's* editorial staff for demonstrably appointing themselves the unquestionable voice of authority on campus, I also bring into question their flagrant abuse of power and misrepresentation of the student community.

The report cards are said to be handed down by a "we," who have been busy watching the YFS/FEY since our election to office. Presumably, this "we" represents either the electorate or someone who speaks on their behalf. Of course, the *Excalibur* does not feel that the student readers are entitled to any explanation on this issue. Although most of us were confronted with the report cards only when they finally published in our name, we are supposed to be contented that whatever the *Excalibur* says goes, after all it is our newspaper. In other words, if the editorial staff of the paper disapproves of anything on campus, it controls the media and can pass itself off as the voice of students in "how" and "when" the staff members choose to exercise their opinion.

This is the same kind of monopolization and misrepresentation that we see in the mainstream press by those all powerful who control the means of information. It is the same abuse of power that manipulates the otherwise uninformed public, to convince that whatever they say goes. The presumption is the people have no say in things and whenever we want their opinion we will give it to them. This kind of media manipulation and misuse of power should not be allowed at York University.

It is sickening that the grading mentality has become so deeply entrenched in our minds that some of us simply do not know when to stop grading. At least when professors grade us it is "mostly" done by someone who is institutionally authorized to say, "if you don't think

excalibur
sexuality supplement



Excalibur will be accepting submissions for the upcoming sexuality supplement until February 14



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