

been grossly wronged by white people and that because of the expressed remorselessness, they continue dying in the streets from wounds inflicted by the white man day in day out. The Japanese, the Italians and the Chinese have asked for reparation for the indignities they suffered during war and have been given. Now it is the turn of Africans who contributed disproportionately in the building of western civilization. They have not gotten their share and they want it now. As for whether Sevigny feels unremorseful, uncomfortable, incredulous, that is his/her problem.

Truly yours,
Omond Obanda

Sophisticated discrimination?

Dear Editor,

Allow me to respond to the story about the replacement of Prof. Kalli Paakspuu which appeared in the front page of the *Excalibur* last week. The 1010 film class might have boycotted her exam and caused her to be replaced from her teaching post, however, I regard her as one of the best teachers who taught me at York.

Her teaching techniques are a combination of both theory and practice. She does carry a book or two of film text with her to class, but from what I know, she does not necessarily read the text from the book chapter after chapter. She also does not make it obvious to the student that what she teaches, she had to learn by studying and putting into practice. The number of the films she has produced bears witness to this.

In our level 2000 film production course last summer, she taught our class from the beginning, using slides, sound, and motion picture. We combined slides and sound, and viewed and discussed them afterwards. We viewed other films by various authors. We visited the National Film Board and LIFT in downtown Toronto. I now know where to go if I want to get access to film-making facilities in Toronto.

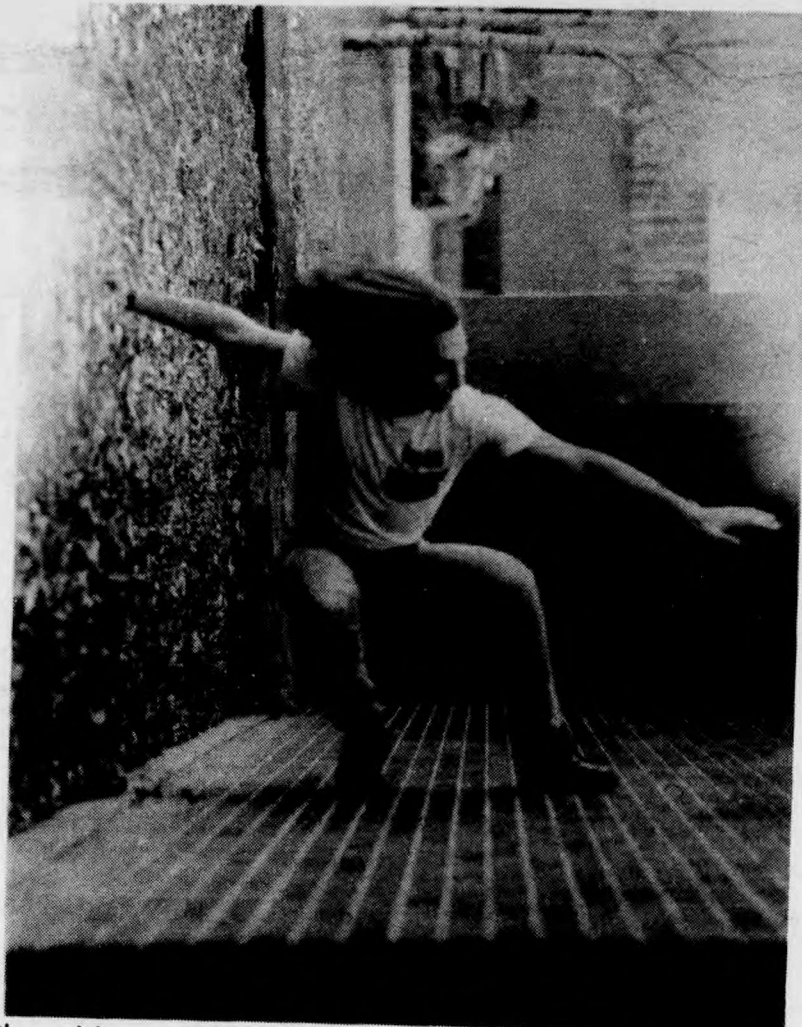
Our class produced sound montages and black and white super 8 films. We worked in small groups or individually, and viewed and discussed our work. We later in the course produced a film montage, a film documentary, and a feature film or a combination of either of the three. I am now capable of producing my own films at a smaller scale using the skills that I have gleaned from her class. She was very helpful and always available to explain and answer any question posed in our class.

I really enjoyed her class. Her selection of topics were sensitive to making our world an enjoyable and better place to live in. Most of the films that we discussed in our class taught us something new. We learned a lot of hands-on material such as editing, and using the movie, video, and still cameras. While we worked on our films individually or in groups, she would then explain the theory, and how we could put that theory into practice to achieve filmic meaning.

Paakspuu is not only a teacher, she is a film producer with lots of practical experience and she knows how things are done. She was able to impart her knowledge and experiences to our class, and one should expect her to be consistent with practice. I could not believe the report in *Excalibur* about the Paakspuu that I know. One former 1010 film student told me that she had taught them nothing.

This is the class's word against hers. However, I attended two of her classes early last year. I was able to watch her screening of the film *Laletee* by Chris Marker. Marker gave me the impression that he has produced his film from still photographs. I could not just figure out how he had arrived to his final product.

When Paakspuu asked the class what kind of film elements the class had noticed in the film, I did not find or see some of the enthusiasm shown by our



"She said they could fly one kilometre, with their arms out like this. She told me last year she actually saw it. I was surprised, very surprised" — The Dalai Lama • Photo by Patrick Davila

Letters continued

class. I sat there, thinking "why did she not screen this film to our class?" I also thought that she had deprived us some knowledge by not screening that very film to our class, even though she has screened a number of other films to us.

I realized later, that Paakspuu could not teach any given class everything that she knows. Though using the same approach, she selects her tools to give special attention to each class. She is not capable of teaching nothing. I would have expected a person with so much experience to be consistent in her job. She loves film and would not just stand in front of a class without saying a word.

It is such a great pity that the 1010 film class ended by boycotting her exam. This caused her immediate replacement. It is very difficult for me to understand the real issue of her replacement. I think there are other issues involved here, and not just the student boycott. Maybe the class could not just click and stick to her advanced teaching style. If not, there must be something more to that, a sophisticated way of discrimination?

Wilson Matidze

Prof clarifies position

Dear Editor,

Re: "Petition demands retraction of Physics Journal Article, (*Excalibur*, Jan 22/92).

Firstly let me correct a quotation attributed to me: I have called for the offending article by Prof Freeman to be "expunged". The word "repugned" is not in my vocabulary or in the English language. In making this call, I am supported by the almost 600 signatories to the York petition, the President of the Canadian Association of Physicists, the Women Scholarship Committee of the Royal Society of Canada and the Committee to Encourage Women in Physics of the Canadian Association of Physicists amongst many others. The Physics and Astronomy Department of York has recently dissociated itself from the views of Professor Freeman as expressed in his offensive article and from the dissemination of these views in the

professional physics literature. Morris Wolfe, the *Globe and Mail* columnist who originally broke this story, has called in another article (*Globe and Mail*, Jan. 21, 1992) for a special committee to be set up to investigate the whole sorry affair.

Clearly in view of this unprecedented concern over an article in a scholarly journal, it is wishful thinking to declare the matter "closed". I am unaccustomed to having my personal actions characterised by a colleague in print as "vulgar". The only public statement that has been made by the Editor, Professor Nicholls (apart from interviews with journalists from *Lexicon* and *Excalibur*) is a memorandum circulated to his immediate colleagues which comprised a copy of a letter he had sent to the *Globe and Mail* in which he categorically states that he will NOT discuss the relevant issues. I subsequently circulated all my colleagues specifically raising the relevant issues ie. what is the status of a retracted publication, would the CJP sue Freeman if he persists in citing a retracted article, had the Citation Index been informed of its retraction, what on earth is misogyny doing in a Physics Journal, how would submissions of this type be handled in the future etc. This was some months ago. There has been no response to these legitimate concerns.

Professor Nicholls, whose contributions to the development of science at York, nationally and internationally are well known and recognised by his peers, has, in my judgement made an error in judgement in accepting the Freeman article for publication. Notwithstanding a positive referee's report it is ultimately the Editor's judgement that decides what gets published. According to Professor Nicholls' account, Professor Freeman should feel free (Heaven forbid!) to submit another contribution arguing the same position. If this received a positive response from a referee, presumably it would be published. No assurance has been given to the scholarly community that, in future, the CJP be adhere to its mandate of publishing "original articles in PHYSICS". Professor Nicholls remains as Editor for the next few months and it is late but not too late for him to clarify issues of concern and apologise to women in general and female colleagues, in particular, for the widespread offense caused by the publication of this article.

In ignoring the widespread concern in the scholarly community over this issue, in refusing to give a clear statement to the Physics community regarding the circumstances under which the article was published, in seeking to obfuscate the issues with vague accusa-

tions concerning "political correctness", in refusing to offer a public apology to women, (working and otherwise), I will leave it to your readership to characterise this behaviour with a suitable adjective.

Coming from a distinguished colleague whose contributions to science and to this university I respect, my choice is sad.

Sincerely,
S. Jeffers,
Department of Physics
and Astronomy.

Excal offers vague apology

Dear Editor,

We are appalled!

In the Jan. 15 issue of the *Excalibur*, the following quotation appeared in a letter to the Editor:

"The goal of Zionism has always been the establishment of a homeland on Palestinian soil and expulsion of Arabs. This has been the plan since Menahem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir and other Zionists collaborated with Hitler and Mussolini back in 1930's and 40's."

This statement is a lie. This statement is an attempt to rewrite history. This statement is driven by hatred.

During the Second World War, 11 million people were murdered by the Nazis. Of these, 6 million were Jews, who were systematically exterminated in a special, preplanned campaign. To suggest that Menahem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir, both Jewish leaders whose families were murdered in the Holocaust, collaborated with Hitler and Mussolini, is an insult to every thinking person's intelligence and is especially offensive to Jews.

A university should foster open, informed debate based on truth. To that end, the campus media has a responsibility to provide a forum that remains true to the facts. In this case, the *Excalibur* failed.

We at the Jewish Student Federation are coming forth to set the record straight. This is not a Zionist issue, nor even an Arab-Israeli issue. Rather, it is an issue of accountable journalism in the student press. When the *Excalibur* chose to print a letter to the editor that trivialized the deaths of 11 million people, it should have verified the claim. But it didn't. When the error was pointed out, the *Excalibur* should have apologized or at least corrected the error immediately. But it didn't. Instead, after much pressure, the *Excalibur* saw fit to print a vague "apology" that linked this issue to another, unrelated one.

What does this say about "our" student paper and the people who staff it?

If you are a York student, then a portion of your student fees go straight to the *Excalibur*. If something in the *Excalibur* offends you then you have a right and a responsibility to say or do something about it.

Will you?

The Jewish Student Federation

Arabs and Jews should talk

Dear Editor,

We have been reading many of the letters written to *Excalibur* in the past few months, and it seems that a heated discussion, or rather, a fact-debate, has arisen between Arab Jewish students surrounding the Mid-East peace talks. Reflecting upon these letters, we feel that there is something missing from

both sides of the spectrum.

The letters written have attempted to be historical overviews of mid-east developments in the 20th century. While history plays an important role in the Middle East, there are two problems to which this kind of historical analysis can lead. The first is that each side focuses on their history and deals only with event that are relevant to one side of the argument. The second problem is that in analyzing history, current, relevant issues are often ignored and forgotten.

Both the Jewish and Arab writers have developed powerful arguments filled with "historical evidence" that their side has been oppressed and terrorized by the other. Both sides have commented that "volumes" or "books" could be written on the other side's infractions. (Jews against Arabs and Arabs against Jewish). Both sides have called the other's arguments propaganda. All of this is correct. The Jewish writers have presented only Arab violence against Jews, while the Arab writers have only mentioned Jewish violence against Arabs. Essentially, both sides have presented a biased, one-sided view of history. In doing this, the "history" presented is incomplete, random, and only effective to show that one side is right, while the other side is in the wrong. It is true that the Irgun, in Israel, massacred the Arab residents at Deir Yassin. It is also true that Arabs murdered 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics in Munich. Both sides have been victimizers and victims.

This back-and-forth mud slinging and laying blame only propagates more of the same. The Arab presents a list of Jewish transgressions against Arabs, the Jew retaliates showing Arab violence against Jews; then another Arab shows more Jewish actions against Arabs and so on. It is a never ending cycle of a war with words. None of these letters mention what we can do to start talking about peace. None of these letters leave even a small opening where

mutual interests can be discussed.

Although we are Arabs and Jews, we must not forget that we are currently Canadian students. We are academics and we should be able to transcend these petty arguments and discuss current issues. Being intellectuals, we should get beyond blaming and start discussing the issues at hand. "Finger pointing" merely leads to more antagonism against both sides. It polarizes Jews and Arabs even more. It is time to stop laying blame. We must realize that Arabs and Jews have been enemies, both sides share the responsibility for violence against each other. In this time, when peace is being discussed, the issue should not be what we have done against the other in the past. On the contrary, the issue should be what we can do for each other in the future. Peaceful borders, mutual recognition of rights, shared economic ventures, sharing water and other natural resources, de-militarization of the region and other similar topics are what need to be discussed in a time for seeking peace.

We challenge the Jewish and Arab populations of York to rise above blaming and "statistical warfare", and actually start discussing the topics surrounding future peace in the region. We should organize a network of Arab-Jewish dialogue where we could begin to understand each other. Of course we won't agree on everything, but this would be a step (at least on the campus level) toward understanding all that is at stake and all that can be gained if and when peace comes between our two peoples. It is time we stop acting like enemies and move toward acting as neighbours.

Jason Leizer and Philip Shoorer,
Progressive Zionist Caucus.

We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 250 words. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name and telephone number. Material deemed libelous or discriminatory by the staff of *Excalibur* will be rejected. The opinions expressed in this section are those of the letter-writers and do not represent those of the *Excalibur* staff, Editorial Board, or Board of Publications. Letters may be mailed or delivered to *Excalibur* • 420 Student Centre • York University • 4700 Keele Street • North York • Ontario • M3J 1P3