

letters  
**One race is  
 enough at York**

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to several letters which have appeared in the *Excalibur*. I realize that people's ethnic and social background are very important to them and the subject of a great deal of pride. I also realize that a lot of these groups are in conflict with one another. This is what I would like to address, if I may.

It seems that in past issues of this newspaper people have taken the liberty to list the atrocities which have been committed against their personal ethnic or social group. The Palestinians have done something to the Jews. The Jews have done something similar to the Palestinians. Similar statements can be said regarding the Croats and the Serbians; Afro-Canadians and Euro-

# Letters

Canadians. Even men and women have committed crimes against one another. I certainly am not trying to minimize the tragedy and pain that I am sure was felt by all fore-mentioned groups. But I would like to make a point.

All of these groups have a very important something in common. We are all members of the human race. I am getting really sick and tired of hearing and reading about all this blame being dished out by everyone. Why don't we all take responsibility and accept that all these acts of hatred were committed by human beings against human beings. If we view these issues as such and look at each other with some sort of unity and respect, perhaps we could get beyond race, religion, gender, and sexual preference; stop killing each other and make this planet a half way decent place to live.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
 Stephanie A. Maidens

## Pulling the rug out at Founders

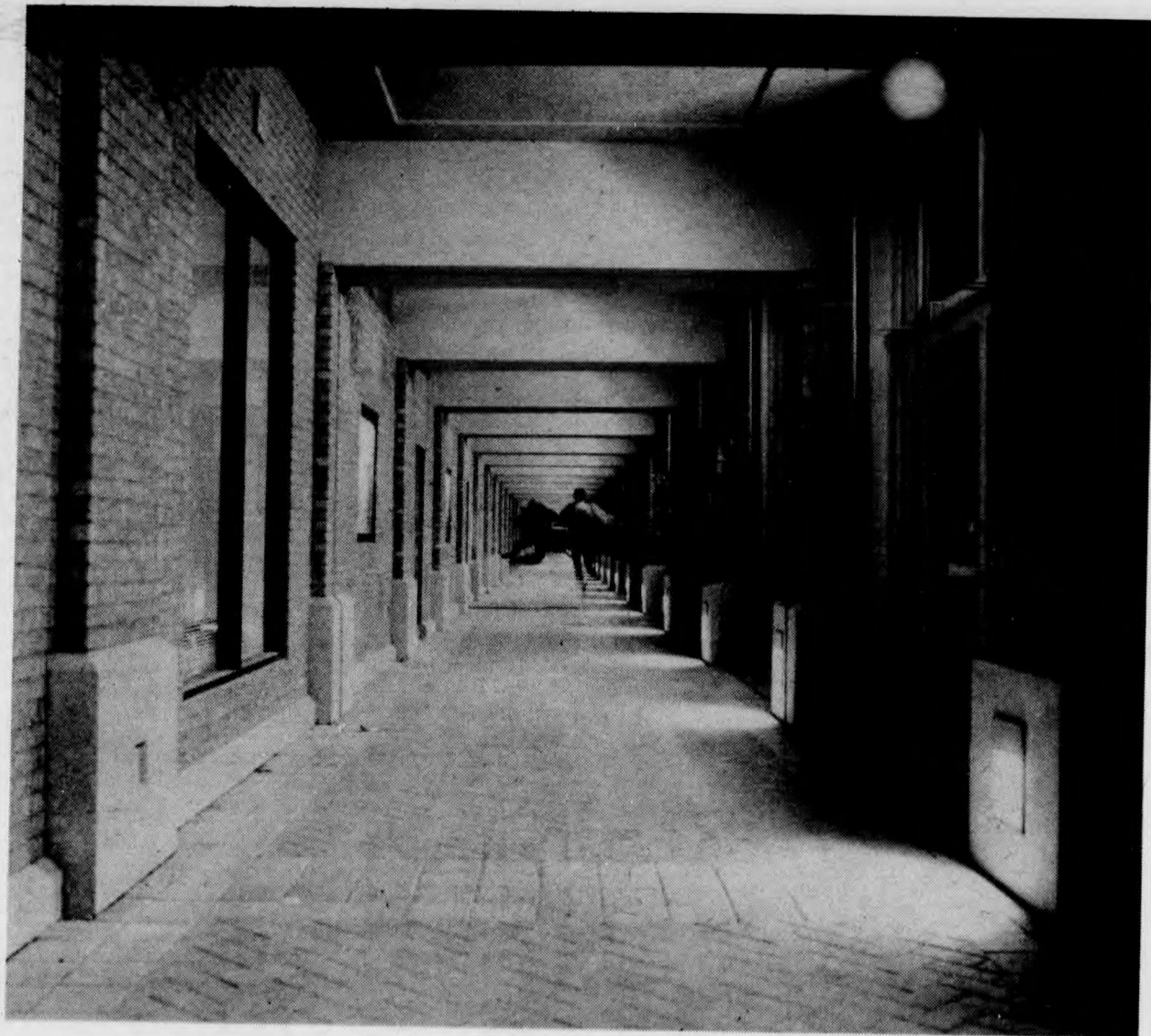
Dear Editor,

We the students of Founders' College Residence 1991/92, are thoroughly appalled and outraged at the disorganized handling of the recarpeting of their floor halls and rooms. Being witness to continued lack of information from York Administration, we the third floor residence students can no longer stay quiet pertaining this latest "screw-up!"

We were first informed that the recarpeting would take place during the Christmas holidays but returned in January to find the same twenty-five year old carpet which we left. We were then told the recarpeting would begin on January 13, but again, we were misinformed. Finally, with the posing of notices in every bathroom on third floor, these residents were to remove all "light weight" objects off their floors for the set date of Jan. 20.

Most rooms went through total upheaval to try and accommodate the carpet layers, but again to no avail. The recarpeting of one-eighth of the halls was completed on Jan. 20, and the rooms should be dealt with later in the week, (hopefully).

Does York administration not realize that the 84 students who live on the third floor have day and/or evening classes, as well as part-time jobs, and do not enjoy folding up their rooms every night, just in case of a surprise carpet-laying the following morning? Granted we lease these rooms on an eight month basis, but contemplating the amount of money we pay to live on campus, a little consideration might be taken for us students, who have enough to worry



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about other than strangers entering our rooms at administration's request.

It is hard to imagine that an administration of such a higher learning establishment such as York University, is incapable of learning to understand and respect the privacy and convenience of the students who relinquish residence fees for the pay cheques of the same administrative employees. We hope this same misunderstanding does not take place in a few months when the second floor carpets are to be redone. In conclusion, we the students of third floor, Founders' College Residence, demand that York Administration be more precise on their dates for restoration events within their residences, with enough advance notice for all students. Thank-you.

*Students of Third floor, Founders' College Residence*  
 (approximately 60 signatures)

## Cut Tories not YUFA

Dear Editor,

Re: (*Excalibur*, Jan 15/92) "Cut YUFA salaries"

Jerry Ginsburg's prescriptions for coping with York's financial crisis are utterly disastrous. His proposal to cut faculty salaries at the upper end of the scale and inadequately raise them at the lowest end points in exactly the wrong direction. Rather than contributing to a reversal of chronic underfunding by governments and mismanagement by university administrations, such a move would merely assist a further deterioration in the quality of education.

Wherever there is a financial squeeze these days, big business has a single refrain: workers must accept less, or jobs will go. The idea that faculty should pay for underfunding is just another version of this tired Tory tune.

Like many others, Ginsburg treats the financial crisis as an unalterable fact of nature. It is not; it is the product of deliberate political policy.

Over the past decade, organizations like the Business Council on National Issues have promoted an agenda which

says that we Canadians are living beyond our means. They have advocated massive cuts in social services — health care, education, welfare, pensions, etc. — in order to get us all used to the idea of living on less.

Yet, while depicting most of us as lazy and pampered, and complaining that government listens too much to "special interests", these business groups refuse to let anyone so much as voice a criticism of those policies which give them special tax privileges, and keep billions out of government coffers.

Merely closing off tax breaks that favour the rich would bring an extra \$8 billion per year into the federal treasury. Annual wealth taxes of the sort common in many countries could raise another \$3 billion. Eliminating the corporate write-off for entertainment expenses would raise \$1 billion. Revenues such as these could go some way towards alleviating the underfunding of education and health care.

That these things are not done, and that ordinary working people and students are expected to pay the price for the recession, has to do with the success that the most powerful groups in our society have had in promoting their agenda. But the idea that the majority of us must exercise restraint while big business continues to be pampered is just that — an agenda, not an inevitable law of nature.

And, as the recession deepens, that agenda is now being imposed sharply and brutally as governments at all levels blindly wield the axe in desperate efforts to cut the costs and trim deficits.

In such a situation, for faculty to accept salary cuts and inadequate improvements for the lowest-paid simply perpetuates the idea that progress can be made by squeezing those of us whose work sustains the university system. One round of self-imposed cuts will then be followed by more austerity, and calls for further cuts. The result will be unrelenting pressure on faculty who are grossly undercompensated relative to the private sector. Underfunding will continue, as will the decline in the quality of education.

What, then, is the alternative? It is for faculty to contribute to a process of political debate and mobilization around the issues of education and social services. Our job is to point out that there

are alternatives, not to fatalistically accept the big business/Tory agenda. It is to insist that deficit-funding be used if necessary until we provoke a change in the political agenda. And it is also to take up the calls by groups like the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association and the Ontario Federation of Students for a real public campaign — debates, rallies, demonstrations, even strikes — against the cutbacks.

Mobilization, not acquiescence, should be our watchword.

David McNally,  
 Director, Graduate Programme in  
 Social and Political Thought.

## Evaluate and ponder points

Dear Editor,

I would like to comment briefly on the short letter written by Janet Jones regarding the "Black Perspective." As a fellow philosophy student I feel that you and I have something in common, if you enjoy the study of philosophy the way I do. Therefore, I would like you to re-think if not "what" you said at least "how" you said it. You said that you would advise the Black Caucus to "ignore" those who opposed so-called "Black articles." Does the study of philosophy, more so than any other discipline, not teach us to have a more open-minded approach to issues? If philosophy does do us this favour then would it not be more open-minded to say that the Black Caucus should "critically examine" those who oppose Black articles instead of simply "ignoring" them? One of the most fundamental practices in philosophy is to evaluate arguments, and indeed that is what I am doing with you. But how can one do this if they are "ignored?"

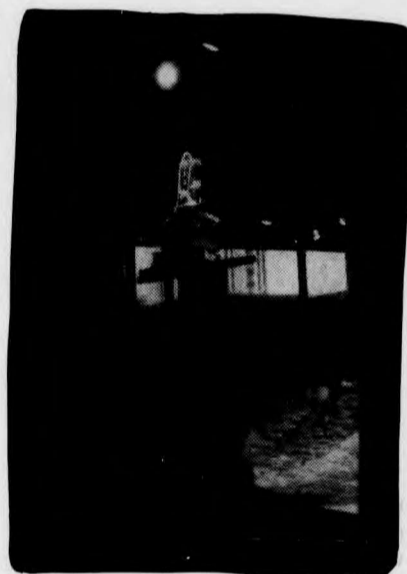
Now I would like you to evaluate and ponder over the following arguments. Let's assume that a person opposed a Black article not simply because the author was Black. But rather the person opposed the article because of "how" the article was written. For example, what if someone opposed your Black article because you singled out White students "only" when you said that the Black articles wouldn't be stopped "just because the White students don't like them." Couldn't a student who opposes a "Black article" be White, Oriental, Arab, Native, or even Black? Your statement clearly implies that only White students oppose Black articles. Now stop right there and re-

read my last sentence. Think about it. Do you see what you are doing? Why not say that Black articles won't be stopped "just because some students don't like them." Why would it be necessary to single out "Whites" and alienate every so-called "White person" on campus? Unless, of course you believe that only Whites oppose Black articles, which intuition tells me is a pretty lame argument.

Furthermore, just because you personally feel that it is necessary to distinguish "yourself" from other students on the basis of your race or colour, is it necessary or productive to do the opposite? To distinguish between "others" on the basis of their race or colour? Do you want students to be seen as students, or Black students and White students? Wouldn't you agree that racism can only exist so long as we find it important to distinguish between people on the basis of their race? To paraphrase Martin Luther King Jr., the person opposing your article might say that he/she hopes that one day people will be judged "not by the colour of skin but by the content of their character."

In the meantime if you feel it is necessary to write "Black articles" then I presume to understand your logic. But in alienating White students I can not presume to understand your logic, unless you write without really thinking about what you said. Still, if one were to oppose your Black article in the manner I just described, can you see the loss in just "ignoring" it as opposed to "critically examining" it? These points give you something to ponder before you give any more advice to the Black caucus.

Royal Morton  
 A fellow philosophy student.



## Don't ask, it's cheese

Dear Editor,

Re: (*Excalibur*, Nov 20/91) Don't Ask it's Art

It recently appeared in the Nov. 20 *Excalibur* and had something to do with the Student Centre Pin-ball Arcade — or, no — the Student Centre Art Gallery...yeah that's it.

Finally, someone who reviews art with the mental agility usually reserved for elite entertainment, like the movies *Porkies* and *Police Academy*, and higher drama such as WWF Championships.

I wholly agree with the review's title, "Don't ask," it should be expanded into a methodology for all other reportage in *Excal* — so we'll all learn how to look the part in our Benneton togs, whilst promenading the mall. Keep on smirkin'.

Sincerely,  
 John Marriott

## Democracy, Greek style

Dear Editor,

Re: (*Excalibur*, Jan 22/92)

The following is in response to a letter written by Aaron Kendal. In it he defines Israel as a democratic state. As Greeks,