

EDITORIAL

Media accomplice to censorship

After a week of warfare, we've seen nothing to convince us that the Persian Gulf crisis will be resolved in a few brisk weeks as promised by the military and eagerly parroted by the mainstream media.

Although most of the press has maintained a heavy pro-war bias in its coverage, it has nevertheless been censored every step of the way by the military. No more TV or newsprint scenes of blood, mutilations and brutality as seen during Vietnam — this war has been constructed to be clean, clinical and value-free programming.

With little of this kind of galvanizing, direct footage, it often seems as if this war is little more than a barrage of experts analyzing the "remote" events of the day and attempting to draw arbitrary conclusions.

Briefed ahead of time by the military about the groundrules of war coverage, the press has complied in curtailing its freedom to report controversial material so as not to be left out of the game.

Gradually, politicians are stepping up the war rhetoric as they prepare for a long, tough haul. And, of course, following them every step of the way like some obedient lapdog is the faithful mainstream press, excited about the guaranteed news value that war always to our occupation.

Even if there is no legitimate news, television, radio and print journalists are still obligated to file stories because of the constant demand for up-to-date information — regardless of its accuracy or relevance.

Most media sources are playing their usual cheerleading role for the U.S. and Canadian war governments, providing only a few token minutes of coverage on the growing anti-war sentiment for every hour of war coverage. Furthermore, there are no "expert" speakers allowed to express an anti-war bias unless they have been compartmentalized and distanced into the external "anti-war" faction.

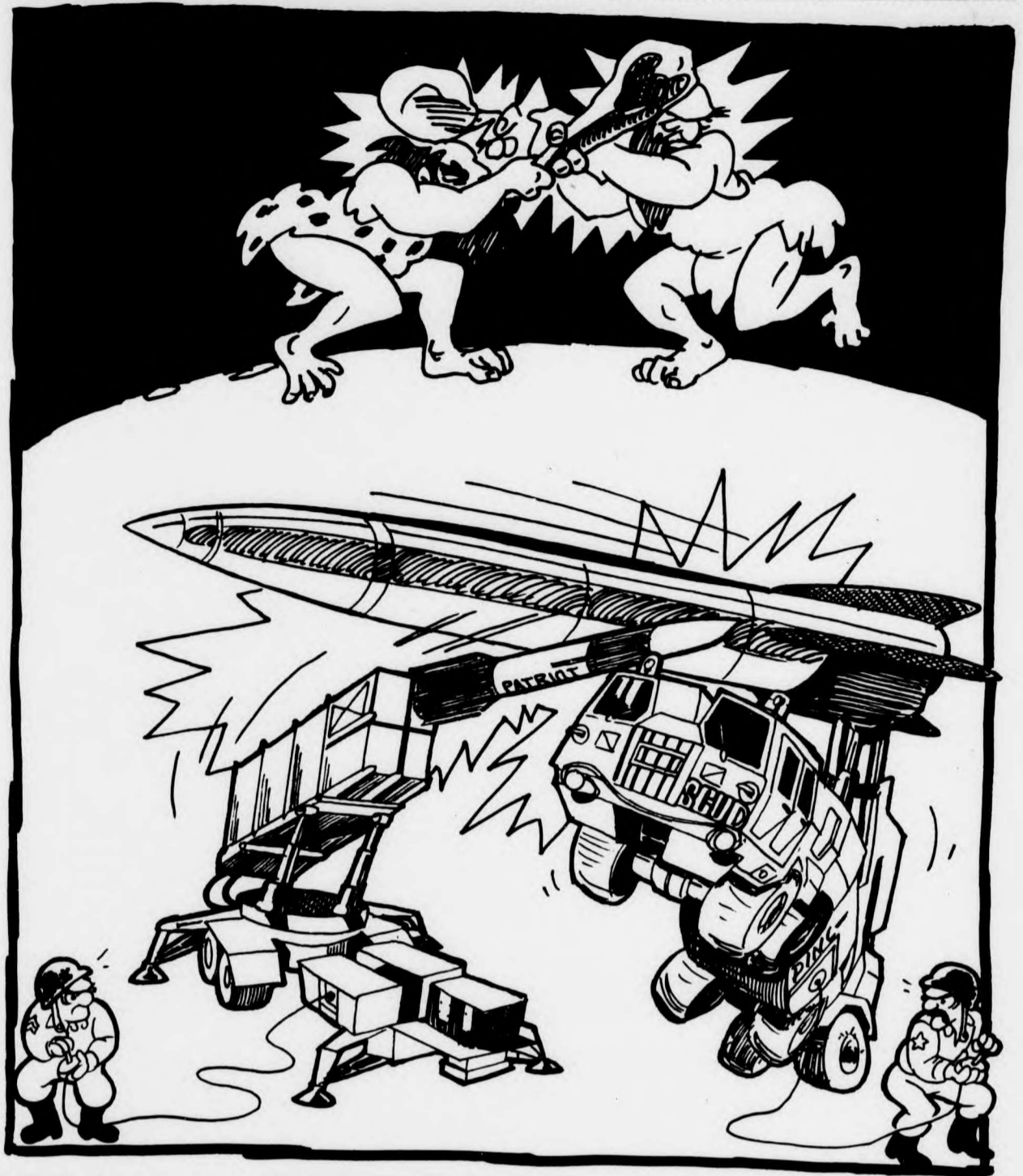
The mainstream press is selling war — it seems to be the only product being offered at the counter. It is not covering elements hostile to the drive to keep war respectable and popular. There is no rebuttal offered against officials who tacitly support the war when they analyze its developments rather than decrying it absolutely.

The question of the evil of war aside, the battle for accurate information has become a desperate one. With only a handful of reporters left in Baghdad and their reports screened and censored by the Iraqis, we are left with propaganda on both sides.

After some modification, words or pictures can be used to prove anything.

The media's reports are so carefully scrutinized that the military censors can tell us whatever suits their own political agendas. And, of course, they can order information to be withheld altogether, arguing that it may endanger possible future missions.

Increasingly, the facts necessary to fuel either a strong pro-war or anti-war viewpoint are melting into the sludge of "your guess is as good as mine."



LETTERS

Excilbur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of *Excilbur* staff or directors. However, we will refuse letters that are racist, sexist, libellous or those which attempt to incite hatred toward an individual or an identifiable group. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

Gulf critics slammed

To the editor

It has come to our attention that a substantial number of our peers seem to side with the "troops out now" movement.

Unfortunately, many of these individuals refuse to acknowledge the many variables at work in the Gulf War. We consider ourselves pacifist, and even socialists, yet we recognize that in certain situations, war is an ugly necessity.

In passing the U.S. Consulate last Saturday, we were amused and somewhat disgusted to see the party atmosphere surrounding what was supposed to be a serious protest of the war. Surely these people, so concerned with death, should view this gathering as an expression of mourning rather than jubilation. We personally felt the dancing was inappropriate and the burning of the American flag, inept (douse it with gasoline first — Civil Disobedience 1000.06A)

One protester accused those of us backing the UN coalition of being "capitalists and imperialists." Are such people so naive as to think that Hussein's annexation of Kuwait was for anything other than oil, money and power?

The irrationality of these "peace lovers" disregard for facts is only equalled by their paranoid hatred of the United States. This loathing leads them to believe that Canada should ignore all obligations to a supposedly U.S. dominated UN.

Finally, it is interesting to hear the protesters claim that this is a Palestinian issue. The restraint Israel has shown when provoked, as well as the commitment expressed by the Arab members of the Coalition, prove that this war is for the liberation of Kuwait, not Palestine.

We hope that every person on University Avenue knows the facts and will treat this complex issue with the gravity it deserves.

Sincerely,
Letitia Meynell
Jill Hart

Ghomeshi criticized

To the editor,

As a responsible York undergrad, I must respond to Mr. Ghomeshi's letter in the Jan. 14 *Excilbur*.

People may well ask what exactly has Mr. Ghomeshi done for the ordinary York undergrad? Absolutely nothing.

While his concern for the homosexual community, the effects of racism and the Women's Centre is admirable, they are not the only issues on the planet and not the ones that are paramount in the minds of the majority of York students.

I say to you, Mr. Ghomeshi, stop pushing your personal agenda down our collective throats. If you feel that you are only carrying out the wishes of the majority of the students, you are wrong. Your electoral win while perhaps being a high voter turn out for York does not mean that you can run rough-shod over the real majority of students who did not vote for

anyone. They still deserve to be represented.

You say you are pro-choice. Who cares? Abortion is a personal matter and by stating your position you have totally and in customary fashion disregarded the other side. Does this mean that the YSF/FEY is pro-choice as well?

You say you are anti-administration. Students are tired of you personifying the administration as some Orwellian nightmare preying on the innocent student body. I have some news for you, Mr. Ghomeshi. Most of the administration are not there to hurt us or keep us down. Many could find higher paying jobs in the private sector. While there are legitimate concerns with the administration, I suppose that you never considered working with the administration in constructive cooperation.

You state you are anti-war. Well I concur that you are right on this point, no war is a good war. However, there is a time to fight, especially if your way of life and all that you believe in is threatened. Does this mean if Canada was attacked you would not enlist?

You state that you are pro OFS/CFS. Is the \$300,000 plus that the YFS/FEY is sending to these organizations going to lower our tuition? Of course not! The cost of tuition has never gone down. Tuition is going up another \$500 and where is the OFS/CFS now? Instead you have burdened the students with more ancillary fees and in return they get nothing but propaganda.

I have some questions for Mr. Ghomeshi. If he is too busy to answer these perhaps he could take some time from his busy itinerary

cont'd on p. 5

EXCALIBUR

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Editor-in-Chief | Peter Stathis |
| Managing Editor | James Hoggett |
| Production Manager | Stephen Perry |
| News Editor | Brent Poland |
| Arts Editors | Trevor Campbell, Joanne "Switch" White |
| Features Editor | Garth Hagey |
| Sports Editor | Josh Rubin |
| Photo Editor | A. Clive Cohen |
| Staff | Bruce Adamson, Jeannine Amber, Leslie Barrell, Frank Cameron, Mary Cerisano, Joan Clement, Nathan Cohen, Mark Dillon, Ed Drass, Jill Flohil, Patrick Follens, Margo Freethy, David Gardner, Brett Gellert, Jessica Goldman, Kerim Gomleksiz, Hugh Hardy, Jim Hounslow, Stuart Irvine, Alex Jorritsma, Daniel Judd, Linda Kingston, Andrew Kyprianou, Faisal Kutty, Alex Lam, Brett Lamb, Jennifer Lim, Mattia Magnatta, Azed Majeed, Herschel Marshall, Paul McLellan, Paul, Meiorin, Chris Mulchinok, Michael Nachoff, Salman Nensi, Sue Pennypacker, Robert Pincombe, Almeida Quinn, Mike Raycroft, Jake Redkin, Peter Roe, Jim Russell, Riccardo Sala, André Souroujon, Swami, Sally Teodoro, Ken Turriff, Kim Van Stygeren, John Vink, Chris Wodskou |
| General Manager | Merle Menzies |
| Advertising Assistant | Patty Milton-Rao |
| Advertising Rep | Meiyin Yap |
| Distribution Manager | Boris Koechlin |
| Typesetter | Mary Jankulak |
| Board of Publications Chairperson | Kevin Connolly |

Excilbur is York University's community newspaper. We publish twice-weekly, and distribute across York and Glendon campuses and various locations within the North York community.

Excilbur is an autonomous corporation with a mandate to inform, educate and provoke thought among York University's diverse population.

The distinct opinions and articles appearing in *Excilbur* belong first and foremost to the individual writers and are not necessarily shared by any other *Excilbur* staff or board member.

Final editorial responsibility is retained by the Editor-in-chief.

EDITORIAL: 736-5239
TYPESETTING: 736-5240
ADVERTISING: 736-5238

MAILING ADDRESS:
Room 111, Central Square
York University
4700 Keele Street
Downsview M3J 1P3