

Jacobovici accepts the criticism given to his latest, film *Deadly Currents*

by Pedram Fouladianpour

Deadly Currents, a documentary examining the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, is undoubtedly one of the most important films of the year.

In a recent interview Director Simcha Jacobovici said he had mixed feelings working on the film. "It made me hopeful and depressed," he explained. "More depressed because you see no solutions. And more hopeful because you see human nuances."

Jacobovici, who leaves for the Israeli premiere of *Deadly Currents* this Wednesday, has faced a mixed reaction from Israelis and Palestinians in Canada.

"Israelis were saying that their soldiers were humanized for the first time, that they were not shown as an Israeli Robocop. And Palestinians (said) that they were (also) humanized since the film showed their culture, their music or themselves in a family situation."

Despite the fact that *Deadly Cur-*

interview

Deadly Currents director Simcha Jacobovici talks about the reaction from Israelis and Palestinians to his film

rents manages to create a balance between different perspectives, the film has received criticism on a political level. Palestinians have argued the film does not portray them as victims of the situation. Israelis, on the other hand, have accused the film of being too sympathetic to Palestinians.

"The problem oscillates between the human rights aspect, which is connected to the Palestinians, and the geopolitical aspect, which is what Israelis are concerned about. The human rights issue is emotional and easier to understand," explained Jacobovici.

Cinematically, *Deadly Currents* is intriguing, deliberately avoiding voice-over narration camera movements are handled the same way they are in a fiction film. "Camera movement reminds us that there is a film going on," Jacobovici pointed out.

Representing reality on the screen has been a dilemma for documentary filmmakers for decades. It is an issue that Jacobovici is relaxed about.

"People are usually media illiterate. When they read a book they know that there is an author behind all that.

In film, the images make people blind, making them believe that there is no one behind, and that what they see is real. We played on the theme of reality as opposed to fiction."

It took Jacobovici and his editor more than a year to trim down 100 hours of footage to less than two hours for theatrical release.

"It was like sculpting," Jacobovici says about the editing process. "It was like playing with a Rubik's cube. There was a scene that we wanted to use so we had to do the scene right before that and so on. There were also certain themes that we were playing with: human rights vs. geopolitical aspects."

Although his next project is a fiction film, Jacobovici has no intention of leaving documentary for good.

"When documentary is well done it is the most powerful kind of cinema. You combine the real with investigation and cinematic techniques. It is also very exciting to combine fiction film techniques with the immediacy of documentary."

Deadly Currents goes beyond the limits of conventional documentaries dealing with a political issue. "People have to realize that we were not trying to concentrate on the news angle of human beings," Jacobovici explained, "we were trying to look at a situation that is universal."



Simcha Jacobovici, the director of *Deadly Currents*, a documentary on the Israeli/Palestinian issue. "When documentary is well done it is the most powerful kind of cinema," Jacobovici says.

arts

film • theatre • galleries • music

York and professional writers read every week at Vanier College

by Zaffi Gousopoulos

I was sitting around, writing some hit poems, when it suddenly occurred to me: wouldn't it be good if there was a place on campus where York's creative writers could meet and give readings? Wouldn't it be good, I thought, if we young writers could support each other?

Actually, someone thought of it years ago. They called it the Writers Read Series, designed for and run by students. Winters College hosted the Series for ten years until Vanier took

it over in 1989, which makes sense: Vanier is the home of the Humanities and Creative Writing departments, as well as York's enduring literary magazine *Existere*.

A new student can really get lost in the shuffle, at a massive temple like York. Being a compulsive loner and recluse is the only revenge. Or so I thought. I wandered through my first three years of University disinterested in anything except writing and reading.

I skipped classes to read Sylvia Plath and ee cummings. I sat around

reading

Writer's Read Series
Vanier Senior Common Room
Mondays, 4 pm

writing poems while the black screen of night slowly unfolded. Sir Gawain and The Green Knight would have to wait — I was writing my own epic.

I would talk about my latest hits with friends and friends of friends over coffee and cigarettes. And I read them in my Intro to Creative Writing workshop every third or fourth week. Poems about death and cynicism, cigarette butts and coffee spoons, the elusive John Cougar and those monthly blues.

It's true what they say about workshops: they can't teach you how to be a writer, but they can teach you how to be a better one. I wasn't just reading or hearing; I was developing my voice. Sounds cheesy, but it's true. I was making myself a poet.

I didn't realize how valuable workshops are until I took one in fourth year. My peers made me think about the responsibilities of being a writer in a social context.

I gave my first public reading through the series last October with another poet from that class. It made me realize how important it is for a writer to develop performance skills; especially poets, since poetry is a spoken art.

I enjoyed my Writers Read experience so much, I decided I wanted to run this gig. I wanted to open it up to anyone and everyone interested in the spoken word.

Libby Scheier, a Creative Writing Prof at York as well as poet/prose writer, launched the Series on September 23, reading from her latest book of poetry, *SKY*. The following week, a York Graduate and I held the first student readings. The next week, several students read from their poems in progress.

Professional Canadian writers also give readings through the Series. The Canada Council sponsors the authors, a real treat for the York Community. On Oct 16, award-winning Crime Fiction Writer Howard Engel read

from his latest manuscript, as well as from his first Benny Cooperman novel.

We are also pleased to present Toronto poet Anne Michaels on the Nov 26. Anne has just been nominated for the Governor General's Award for Poetry. Beverly Dorrio is also scheduled sometime in late late January.

After an open question period, the speakers are taken to dinner in the Faculty Lounge. This is our way of saying thanks, as well as giving students and faculty an opportunity to talk informally with the writers.

On Nov 11, the Creative Writing Faculty brought their work to the Se-

ries. It was the best reading of the year. Ten Creative writing professors gave wonderful performances. Led by Don Summerhayes, the coordinator of the program, some of the readers included Bob Casto, Lola Tostevin, Libby Scheier, Rhea Tregabov and Rafael Rivera.

If you enjoy writing, the Writers Read Series (ie. Zaf & Phil) would love to present you. Come read and/or listen. Have a beer, have a smoke; we even supply the coffee, crackers and cheese (and sometimes cookies).

The Writers Read Series is held Mondays at 4 pm in the Vanier Senior Common Room, except the first week of every month.

Modern American slavery

Sydney St. Nicholas

This Tuesday, TV Ontario presents the award winning documentary *H-2 Worker*, which examines, for the first time, the story of the 12,000 Caribbean farm workers who come to Florida and work on the Sugar plantations.

The documentary reminds us that although slavery and the slave trade were abolished over a hundred years ago, slavery is still practiced today in America.

H-2 worker examines the horrible living and working conditions of the farm workers.

The men who cut the cane are denied appropriate care if injured, paid less than minimum wage and are deported if they do not do exactly as they are told.

American farm workers discuss in explicit detail how they are promised \$5.35 an hour and told they are going to be paid hourly. In reality they are paid for what they produce, having to work up to 16 hours a day to make \$1.05 an hour.

Michael Manley, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, says the levels of poverty in Jamaica force the workers to go to Florida.

TVO host, Catherine Olsen, also takes a look at how the farm workers

television

The Human Edge: *H-2 Worker*
TV Ontario
Tuesday, November 26, 10 pm

in Southern Ontario are treated.

Are farm workers exploited here in Canada? The question remains unanswered. The farmworkers are hesitant to speak, leaving Reverend Oliver Dailey to speak on their behalf. Dailey feels the situation is much better in Canada than the US, but I would have preferred to hear the farmworkers speak.

H-2 Worker shows us that slavery and the slave trade are prevalent in today's society, but it does not suggest solutions to these problems. Everyone knows that the jobs the farmworkers are doing are jobs that Americans and Canadians do not want to do, but how do we address this? In Canada, the farmworkers won't even speak about the situation. In the West Indies, there are still people who believe the road to wealth is through the farm worker program.

Hopefully, *H-2 Worker* will open the eyes of the people who can make changes that will rectify these injustices.

H-2 Worker appears on TVO's *Human Edge* series on Tuesday, Nov 26.

