

# Excalibur

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## OFS elections

### Hacks confer at York

Neil Wiberg

The Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) elected Karen Dubinsky as its full-time Chairperson at its winter conference at York last weekend. Dubinsky, a part-time student at the University of Toronto, will have to reconcile different approaches desired by aggressive and passive forces within the organization.

Dubinsky was the only candidate on the final ballot. Under a bizarre election procedure, all candidates for chairperson go through a parliamentary screening ballot. This screening ballot determines whether the voting schools find each individual candidate acceptable to run for chairperson. Dubinsky passed this hurdle,

but Clayton Bond, from Algoma College, did not. Bond was deemed unfit to stand for election because he failed to get the necessary 15 votes from the 22 schools.

Several schools represented at the conference argued for OFS to oppose tuition fee hikes with demonstrations, petitions and aggressive media campaigns. Leading these "hawk" schools were Carleton, University of Ottawa (which holds observer status at OFS) and York. The student leaders of these institutions claim to have potential organizers for proposed OFS events.

Other schools, such as McMaster and Guelph fell into the "pacifist" camp. They felt that demonstrations would be a flop. They also appeared uncertain about the government tuition fee proposals.

The hawk schools prevailed. The convention adopted a strategy calling for a broad public education campaign sprinkled with high-profile media events.

Dubinsky has been a member of the OFS executive since 1978. The former Lakehead history student has specialized in Northern Affairs and Women's

Issues during her term on the executive.

She told *Excalibur* that OFS has to combine altruism with student's special interests. She pledged not to work against social services groups in the fight for government grant money.

Bilingualism, a chronic problem for OFS, was again an issue at the conference. Delegates from Glendon, Carleton and the University of Ottawa were disappointed at the absence of bilingual facilities. Dubinsky promised better French services after the University of Ottawa joins OFS.

The conference was well organized by CYSF. Delegates were unanimous in their praise of the work of Vicki Hodgkinson, Keith Smockum, Barb Taylor, Peter Brickwood and Pat Fonberg.

Less popular, however, was *Excalibur*. Several delegates were angered with a story entitled "OFS—Under attack" which appeared in last week's edition. Delegates claimed the story was cynical and negative. The article discussed criticisms levelled against OFS by the Progressive Conservative Party and franco-phone students in Ontario.



This isn't Karen Dubinsky. Judy Sibilin stars in the play *Abelard and Heloise*, on tonight through Saturday in the Vanier Dining Hall.

## Get moving!

Jonathan Mann

Tuition is going up but the CYSF isn't taking it lying down. They're initiating a campaign to publicize the government's proposed 18.2 per cent tuition hike, and organize opposition against it. Highlights of the campaign include:

- John Sweeney, Liberal education critic, will visit Curtis D on Feb. 14 to outline the Liberals' position on the increase.
- Presentation of the student position on the increase to York's Board of Governors at its Feb. 19 meeting.
- A proposed meeting by Minister of Colleges and Universities (your friend and mine) Bette Stephenson, in late February or early March.

According to Barb Taylor, CYSF Vice-President for External Affairs, student opposition properly organized can succeed in fighting off the increase. But, declared Taylor, "It's time for York students to get moving against the government's restraint policy."

## Wind from the east

Barb Mainguy

The Chinese people appear to have won an uneasy democracy, says John Fraser of the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, who spoke to a York University audience last week.

For almost two hours, Fraser and his colleague Elizabeth McCallum fielded questions about human rights, the cultural revolution and Chairman Mao's statement that the Chinese people must emancipate their minds.

One of the questions that soon came up was whether the turn to democracy was real, or an elaborate Machiavellian plot to

lure radical thinkers into the open, and then take action to subdue or discredit them.



Marco Fraser tells of his travels

The question was raised in light of the recent trial of Wei Jingsheng, a 29 year-old newspaper editor and activist who took advantage of the Xidan democracy wall to speak out against injustices in the Chinese communist system. He was later arrested, and sentenced to 15 years in prison. The reason given for his incarceration, Fraser said, "was that he had made the Chinese people lose face."

But while this case may have appeared to make a mockery out of China's new democracy, Fraser does not feel that the original fight for freedom has been lost. "I never let anyone—

in my presence anyway—belittle what went on at that wall. It radicalized a whole generation of Chinese who are ethical, logical, rational thinkers."

Fraser also noted that China is now establishing a broad cultural base with the Western nations. "They're very careful of what goes on stage and on television," he observed, "but Western literature is available more and more. Balzac and Dickens are snapped up, as is Shakespeare in translation, and one friend of ours is dying to get his hands on some Hemingway."

Fraser is convinced the changes now being made are permanent. As Chinese correspondent for two years—from 1977 to '79—he noticed a definite change in the relationship of the Western press to the Chinese government. Fraser was with the first group of journalists allowed to travel freely through China and into Tibet. They were the first to be allowed contact with Chinese people other than diplomats and official press contacts.

"The democracy wall broke boundaries to workers, students and official party members," Fraser was pleased to say, "and no Western press was ever censored from the Chinese side. We made Chinese friends, and were able to invite them into our homes. It was the first time Chinese people ever spoke out to foreigners. This gave us a new eye on China, the best eye a foreigner can have."

## Oil market manipulated claims prof

Michael Monastyrskij

"It is my contention that we don't have a crisis, but we have in fact a manipulation of the market." With these words Mordechai Abir, a visiting history professor from the Hebrew University, began his discussion entitled "Energy Crisis in the Middle East". Five people heard him speak Tuesday in Stong College's Sylvester's Lounge.

Abir did not say that we have an abundance of oil, but that nevertheless "we have to disregard the myths that have been disseminated by the oil exporting countries."

He first attacked the belief that the world's proven oil reserves

are declining. He pointed to OPEC's recent declaration that in the interests of conservation they would be cutting production. Just four days before the declaration, Venezuela, an OPEC member has announced that it had discovered new oil supplies equal to the world's known reserves.

Abir stated that as late as 1978, "very credible scholars predicted a decline in oil prices and the breakup of OPEC."

What then has happened to change the situation?

According to Abir, two things occurred. First, OPEC's power rose dramatically and second,

the U.S. declined as a superpower.

He credited OPEC's new power to the fact that during the 1960's American oil consumption increased sharply, while the country's reserves were gradually declining. As a result, small oil companies rushed to do business with the Middle East and Venezuela, which formerly had only attracted multi-national companies. In Abir's opinion this gave oil producing countries more leverage.

This leverage was increased by America's loss of prestige after the Vietnam war. Abir related an anecdote told to him by an unnamed Iranian, who had been

involved in OPEC's early meetings.

According to the source, when OPEC first considered raising the price of oil, they were afraid the price of oil, they were afraid that the United States would refuse to pay the new price. As a result they quadrupled the price in the hope of receiving their original demand after bargaining. However, rather than rejecting the new price, American oil companies began to scramble for guarantees in supply.

Abir warned that while that story "held no guarantee of truth" it still indicates that America's loss of confidence has influenced the present high price of oil.