

### Rabbi Berger speaks at York

# Zionists are slanderous, says Reform Jew

By MICHAEL HOLLETT  
Israel is a doomed state if Zionism, in its current form, remains a driving force in the country.

This was the message Rabbi Elmer Berger, a Reform Jew and member of the American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism brought to a gathering of about fifty York students last Thursday.

The meeting was sponsored by the Alliance of Non-Zionist Jews.

Berger prefaced his remarks to the apparently Zionist crowd by advocating for serious debate on the sensitive issue rather than close-minded opposition.

He said it was a tragedy that Zionists have tried to suppress, slander and smear the discussion of Zionism.

Said Berger, "Let them (Zionists) speak or argue with us rationally. In the long run it will strengthen Zionism and Israel if they are worthy of it."

Despite heckling from the audience, Berger explained his reasons for being non-Zionist.

He said he did not believe Jews are a nation, and that Reform Judaism has survived without the nation concept. Berger feels it is not necessary for Jews to be Zionists.

Berger spoke of different types of Zionism and termed the current form that dominates Israel as bad and the cause of turbulence in Jewish life today.

"The Jews currently in Palestine," Berger said, "are the most endangered in the world."

He felt unless foreign Jews could think of an alternative, Jews in Israel are seriously threatened. According to Berger it is just a

matter of time before the rich Arab states combined with shifting world opinion, will bring about the end of Israel.

He felt that Zionism has ignored the Palestinian people's rights and thus created an unworkable situation. The formation of the Zionist Israeli state imposes exclusivist concepts which treated the non-Jews as second-class citizens.

Berger said there is no equality for non-Jews in Israel. He said that while Jews are encouraged to become Israeli citizens it is dif-

ficult for non-Jews, even if they are returning Palestinians. He dismissed Arabs in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) as "Uncle Toms".

Berger closed his talk by quoting two Zionists. One of them, David Gill said, "Jewish people must overcome racist elements of Zionism. They must re-commit themselves to peace through justice and equality for all, including the Palestinians."

In the heated question period that followed both chairman Abe Weisfeld and Berger spoke.

Weisfeld said, "During World War II, Zionists did not criticize those nations that did not admit Jews because they were lobbying for a Jewish state".

Weisfeld said it was important to fight for the rights of Jews throughout the world so there would be no need for Jewish state to flee to. He called Zionism a defeatist approach to the Jewish question.

The meeting was abruptly ended when Berger had to leave to catch a plane.

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## Fiction writer wanted at York

By ANNA VAITIEKUNAS  
The search committee for the new creative writing programme has not yet selected a writer to head the programme scheduled to begin this September.

Chairman of the search committee Eli Mandel said that they expected to choose a candidate in a 'relatively short period of time' though he could not say exactly when.

Mandel said the committee received tremendous response to advertisements for the position from writers across Canada. "We

reviewed applications from 35 distinguished writers" he said, "who had experience in fiction, television and film writing."

According to Mandel, the committee has eliminated most of the 35 applicants and is presently considering the remaining four. Neither Mandel nor Dean Whitla, a member of the search committee would say who the remaining four persons were.

Whitla said that the committee could not disclose the names of the candidates because some of them hold positions of eminence at other institutions. "We are engaged in very delicate negotiations that must be dealt with some discretion."

Since the creative writing programme is cross-listed in the faculty of Fine Arts and the Humanities Division of the Faculty of Arts, the eventual writer will have to meet the

requirements of both faculties.

The candidate will be screened by faculty members who will be course instructors in the creative writing programme. "The selection process," Whitla said, "is rather labourious because there are so many people involved in it."

Asked if previous teaching experience was a priority in the selection, Mandel said that it wouldn't necessarily be a consideration if the person had demonstrated literary excellence. "A large number of writers have already taught at various institutions though," said Mandel.

The search committee placed advertisements in the private and public media, arts councils and universities across Canada.

Canadian writers have been given priority over foreign writers, although "if a great Irish writer like William Butler Yeats were still living, we'd certainly consider him" quipped Mandel.

The committee is looking for a writer of considerable experience in prose fiction who also has some experience in television and film writing.

Students in the new creative writing programme will be able to graduate with a general Honours B.A. in creative writing through the Fine Arts or Arts faculty.

The scheduled creative writing programme will be the first in the country.

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Moral: Don't hold out for the impossible dream.

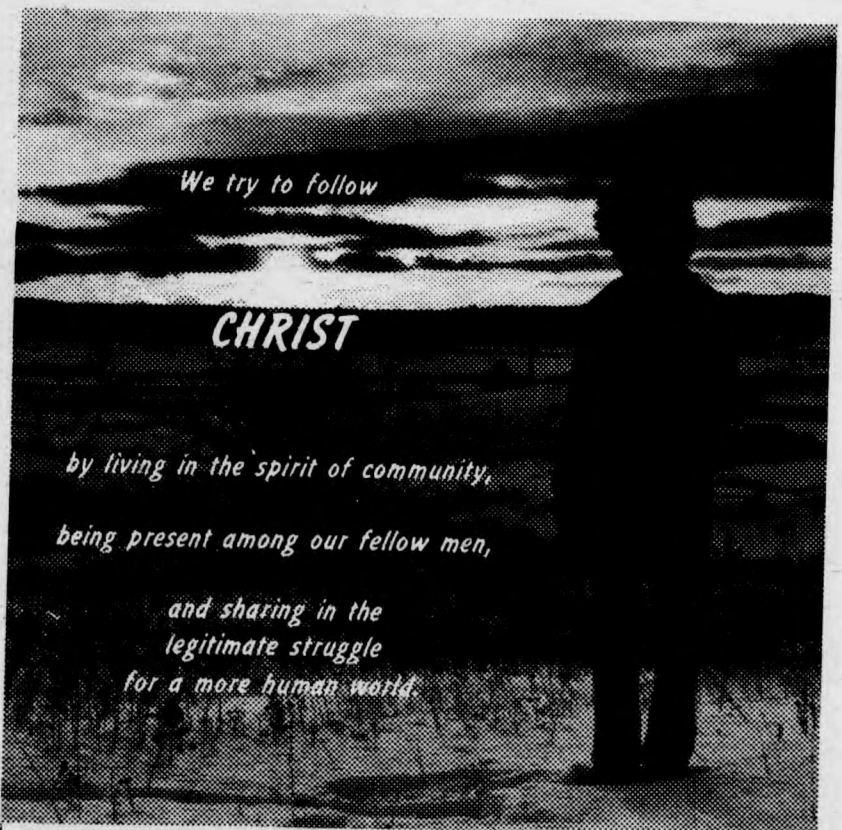
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