

Troubles at the *Surface*

BY KRISHNA RAU

TORONTO (CUP) — Female editors at a Queen's University newspaper have received a letter threatening them with death and rape.

Five days after *Surface*, a bi-monthly newspaper published by the arts and science faculty, put out its Oct. 24 edition, a letter made from a collage of newsprint arrived at its offices.

"Congratulations!" the letter said. "Here's your politically correct death notices. We're gonna rape u dykes...In fact, we will kill any and all feminists slowly. Yes, we think all strate men are rapists. Suck all cocks. U silence us white men."

The other side of the letter listed the eight women who appeared on the paper's masthead and said "*Surface*. A message for the fucking feminist bitch dykes cunts."

Nicholas Snider, the president of Queen's Arts and Science Undergraduate Society which acts as the four year-old *Surface*'s publisher, said the paper and ASUS had received a large number of complaints about articles in the Oct. 24 issue.

But Suzanne Kim, the editor of *Surface*, said the letter should not be seen as a complaint about the paper's content.

"We do see a separation between the content of the paper and the death threats.

"It's really a symptom of violence against women. This letter is another attempt to silence women."

Snider said there were two pieces in the paper that caused a lot of anger on campus.

"...as women become more and more vocal, they get more threats"

One piece dealt with racial differences by comparing white and brown bread. The piece claimed "white bread is so much more lacking in substance than brown bread...so bland...so essentially useless."

There was also a poem in the issue with lines such as "Yes, we think all strate men are rapists (and dead men don't rape again), and "Jesus was a flaming faggot who sucked the cocks of all his disciples (except for Judas)."

But Kim said the poem was written by a gay, white male, and the content of the issue was decided on by the entire masthead, which includes men.

She said some people on campus

were blaming the paper for bringing the threat on themselves.

"There's a sentiment out there and in student government that we somehow deserved this death threat. Nobody deserves this."

The Queen's women's centre also saw the death threat as "an attack on women."

"There's this feeling that this is a backlash because it was directed against the women on *Surface*," said Margaret Thompson, a member of the women's centre collective.

"*Surface* is such a progressive paper and it's such a voice for marginalized groups that people resent it."

But both Kim and Thompson stressed that Queen's is no more sexist than any other university.

"Sexism is rampant on campus," said Kim. "But we're no different from any other campus."

"What I'm noticing more and more on campus is that as women become more and more vocal, they get more threats."

Snider said ASUS had struck a committee to look at its relationship with *Surface*.

"We don't have any editorial control over *Surface*, nor are we requesting any," he said. "But we've had a lot of angry people asking 'Why are you giving our money to a paper we don't agree with?'"



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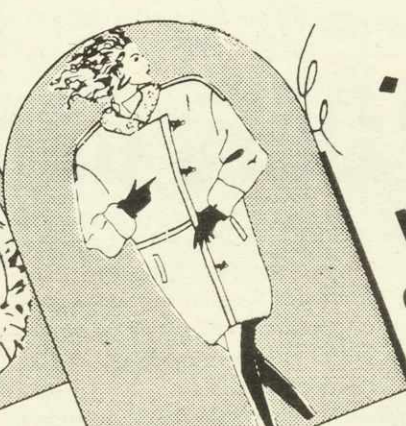
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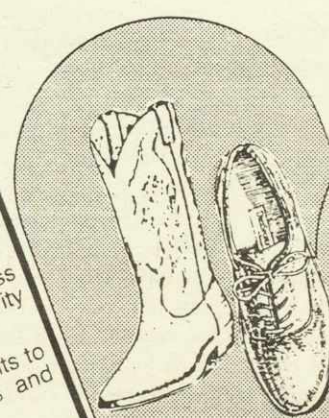
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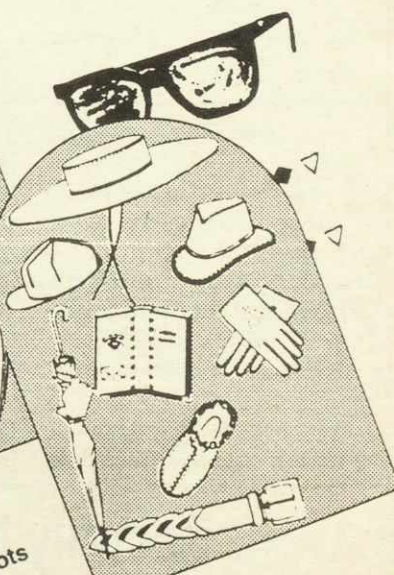
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