

Letters

Sidetracked

Mr. Alzarah's letter (ODE Jan. 19) represents another attempt to avoid the key issues concerning a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is unfortunate that he chooses to sidetrack readers with false and irrelevant comparisons between Israel on one hand and South Africa and the Nazis on the other.

All Israeli citizens, Jews and non-Jews alike, are equal under the law. Each citizen 18 years and older has the right to vote, any citizen may sit in Israel's Knesset (the equivalent of our Congress) and in fact several non-Jews are in the Knesset. Anti-Zionist parties, in spite of the fact that they advocate the overthrow of the state, are also represented. Critics of the government (and there are many) have access to a free press and are entitled to due process in the courts. Contrary to popular myth, Israel is not a theocracy and there is no single state religion. Rather, Israel employs the old Ottoman miller system that recognizes the rights of all religious groups. Hence, Islam and Christianity are as much "state religions" as Judaism is.

This does not mean that there are no problems with racism and bigotry. Unfortunately, Israel has more than her share of extremists, both Jewish and Arab.

This is not surprising, considering the two peoples have been locked in mortal combat for nearly half a century. It is surprising, however, that Israel has developed its democratic institutions, imperfect as they are, while under a declaration of war from its neighbors for the last 40 years, a feat unmatched by any other nation in modern human history.

As for the list of atrocities Mr. Alzarah charges Israel with, I think it's a waste of time to allow a debate to degenerate into a trading of horror stories. Suffice it to say that too much

blood has been shed by both Arabs and Jews.

Mr. Alzarah writes well and is an effective advocate for his people. It is too bad that he won't channel his talent and energy towards discussing a way out of this unnecessary and disastrous conflict instead of trying to rewrite history.

**Nils Christiansen
Brian Nelson-Munson
David Shayne
Law students**

Tunnel vision

Kasey Brooks won the election to the ASUO presidency last year on the contention that a university's student government should not concern itself (as her opposition party did) with affairs outside the university community. This position is deplorable.

A university does not exist in order to shade its eyes from events surrounding it, to concern itself exclusively with that which occurs within its confines, while banishing from view events of worldwide importance. To do so is a denial of education. Yet this is exactly what the representative of this university's students professes.

If Brooks is to be truly representative, she must come to realize the students she represents may be concerned with issues more significant than parking problems and athletic ticket prices.

The Socratic university was one in which free inquiry was of utmost importance — inquiry and engagement in all matters.

A university must be universal, not selfishly preoccupied with the immediate and the trivial.

Would students at Berkeley stand for a president whose

tepid beliefs dared not tread upon even the slightest foreign or serious terrain? Would students anywhere, who really think and who come to the University to do just that, support such narrow-mindedness?

Brooks and her entourage should perhaps do some research into the meaning of the University, its origins and ideals, and in the process reassess her values as president. If she fails to recognize the University as a place of universal concern and awareness, then I only hope she will soon be replaced by someone who does.

**Michael Coffino
Student**

Violent funding

I was shocked to see "made possible by grant funds from the United States Department of Energy" on the construction site sign for the new Science V-Physics building.

I figured that physics funding in our era would have to be coming from something related to the military, but had presumed that this funding would appear to be coming from someplace else; that military funding would be veiled. This was my dream world until a few days ago.

The sign says it's happening in the open. Why did I think otherwise? Many (all?) universities do research and development dirty work for the military and have for a long time. It was naive of me to think that the University was any different. Still, it's sickening to think of mass murder planners counting on certain information for their system coming from my school.

**Joe Wayman
Graduate, fine arts**

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

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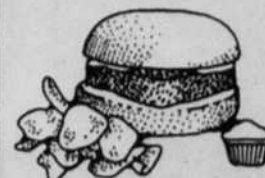


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