



Thursday February 21, 2008

Dear Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Dr. Ilene Busch-Vishniac President Peter George, and McMaster Students Union Executive,

The York Federation of Students (YFS), representing 45000 undergraduate students and the Graduate Students (GSA) at York University representing 5,700 students, are shocked and dismayed to hear that your administration along with the McMaster Students Union has banned the use of the phrase “Israeli Apartheid” on campus.

This strange and unprecedented ban is a blatant violation of democratic freedoms of speech and dissent, and an attack on students’ right to organize. It is the position of the YFS and GSA that universities are sites where discussions and debates about difficult geo-political questions should be promoted, not stifled. International controversy about use of the phrase “Israeli Apartheid” cannot be resolved through repression, but through ongoing intellectual exchange.

The YFS and GSA strongly support the United for Students’ Rights (U4SR) coalition at McMaster in their demand that the disgraceful ban on the phrase “Israeli Apartheid” be rescinded in accordance with a basic commitment to freedom of expression and organization in the democratic context of the public university.

Sincerely,

Gilary Massa
VP Equity
York Federation of Students
Local 68 Canadian Federation of Students

Kelly Holloway
President Graduate Student Association at York University
Local 84 Canadian Federation Students