# Subtle racism and campus blacks

by Jim Herbert

Racism against blacks at the U of A is generally a subtle rather than an overt phenomenon, according to several members of campus African student organizations.

Austin Sichinga of the African Student Association says that "it's. rare for someone to come and tellyou 'hey nigger, go home.' The racists here are much more subtle about the way they come across."

He believes that many African students are overly sensitized about racism and thus see it everywhere. Of all the "racist" incidents he has heard about, Sichinga says that 60 per cent were cases of misinter-

As an example, he told of an African student who was on an

empty bus. Another person got on the bus, but didn't sit and talk to the African student, who took this as a sign of racism, since it was the custom in his native country to socialize with strangers on the bus.

Coli Fakinledge, of the Nigerian student association, agrees with Sichinga that cases of overt racism are rare. He sees an incident as racism only "if somebody does something to you and its all because of your colour.'

Fakinlege believes that African students sometimes use racism as an excuse for failure.

"I know there are people who tell me something and I know they are using racism as a crutch. Some people like you, some don't.'

This is not to say that racism does

not exist at the U of A African students describe many instances where their colour adversely affected they way people treated

John Caeser of the Ghana Student Association tells of professors who wrongly accuse African students of plagiarism, believing that their grasp of English isn't good enough for them to have written a high quality paper.

You write something and people aren't sure you wrote it. Its a question of trust and confidence."

Sichinga tells of black people "who've gone to parties and been told that they're not welcome.'

Fakinledge describes an incident where a black was approached and asked if he had any marijuana to sell, without having given any indication that he was selling drugs.

Fakinledge blames the media for many of the misconceptions about blacks.

"When you portray a group of people as n'er do wells, always in need of help from others, the result is a racist image."

As an example, Fakinledge cites a television program on prisons which showed many black convicts while a show on the space program portrayed an all-white group of astronauts.

Sichinga, Fakinledge and Caeser see most cases of racism as the result of ignorance and fear of the unknown rather than outright hatred. This type of racism can best be combatted by education and awareness, they say.

Gazette editor on student journalism

# Papers should provoke

Fights between student politicians and journalists over the editorial content of student newspapers don't surprise one senior Canadian newsman anymore.

"Its was the same when I was a student editor," chuckles the current editor-in-chief of the Montreal Gazette, Mark Harrison. Harrison was in town last week as the temporary editor-in-residence of the journalism program at Grant McEwan Community College.

He was the editor of the U of Toronto Varsity 35 years ago. "Back then, we were the right-wing paper. Our rival was the (left-wing)

"We did sponsor Tim Buck (then-leader of The Communist Party of Canada) to speak on campus once, which made everyone want to lynch us."

Engaging in such actions in order to provoke strong debate on issues is a very important role for student papers, said Harrison. 'Mao Tse Tung had a saying:

Plant a hundred seeds and let a hundred flowers flourish. "Student papers should be more

provocative than mainstream papers. They should put forth any editorial view point they want without being interfered with by the politicians," stated Harrison, although



Montreal Gazette editor Mark Harrison says that student newspapers should strive to be provacative.

he disagreed with giving elected politicians their own personal

In cases where ugly reality takes over from idealism and editors are threatened by the politicians with dismissal because of ideological differences, Harrison said "Let them

"If they want to make a martyr out of you for those reasons, so what? Keep giving them hell, go down fighting for your beliefs if it comes to that. There are worse things than being fired."

Photo Bill Doskoch

"After all, Peter Gzowski, (host of CBC's Morningside) was fired as editor of the Varsity and he hasn't done too badly," pointed out Harrison.

Does he ever see student papers becoming less confrontational?

"No. Student politicians and journalists have one thing in common: both are intensely political. This will almost always lead to confrontation as long as people have strong opinions," concluded Har-

# NDP candidates forum

The U of A campus New Democrats are hosting a public forum for the four candidates seeking the

provincial nomination in Edmonton Stratchona for the next provincial election.

The four candidates seeking nomination are lawyer Gordon Wright, U of A law professor Burke Barker, Joanna Miazga, an employee of the Public Service

Alliance of Canada, and Randy

Municipal Affairs Minister Julian Koziak is currently the MLA for Edmonton Strathcona. Koziak has been the member for 14 years.

Wright ran for the NDP in the last provincial election in 1982.

The public forum will be held Thursday at 8 p.m. in Lister Hall. The nomination meeting is set for **Yard Apes** 

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