

**LETTERS**

cont'd from p.4

so. However, this paper will NOT be called the *Lexicon*, as that name belongs to Bethune College.

The students of Bethune College will not allow OUR paper to be stolen from us. As for a "board of directors to mediate between students and the *Lexicon* staff," I remind him that the members of Bethune College council ARE elected by the students of Bethune College, and they act on behalf of Bethune students. We do not require mediators. What we need is a staff that listens to the will of the people they are writing for.

Finally, I question the motives behind Ghomeshi's executive student government, for which I and other Bethune students pay. I question his stance on this issue. He and his executives are elected and paid to serve the students of York, and this includes serving Bethune students. As you saw on Monday, Mar. 11 in the Bethune JCR, many Bethune students are dissatisfied with the

*Lexicon* and its lack of Bethune coverage.

Just because Ghomeshi may personally support the *Lexicon*, I do not feel that he has the right to use his position to attempt to influence the students of Bethune in his favor.

Furthermore, I do not believe he and his executive were acting on behalf of the students of Bethune College when they endorsed a demonstration aimed at an elected body representing the students of Bethune College, and supported by many members of Bethune College.

I do not feel that Ghomeshi has the right to abuse his position in such a manner, and I feel that he should not try and bully Bethune College council in this manner, especially on an issue with which we have the support of many Bethune students.

If he cannot keep his personal associations and feelings out of his actions as YFS president, then I urge him to resign as YFS president.

Sheldon Bergson

**"Racism" used out of context**

To the editor,

Re: Environmental racism (Mar. 13 edition) by Larry Goldberg

In reading *Excalibur* this year, it would seem to me that many groups and writers are guilty of misusing the word "racism." Explain to me how there can be something called environmental racism if the environment does not consist of even one race?

Goldberg is not the only one guilty of using the word "racism" in a nonsensical manner. The YFS-sponsored rally against "institutional racism" was similarly misguided by Jean Ghomeshi and his apostles. I fail to see or hear the racism in current course content nor do I see the lack of certain courses being a form of "racism."

Jean Ghomeshi and the rest of his deluded followers attach the word "racism" to their cause because they know that anyone who disagrees with them and dares to speak up about it is clearly a racist.

There is a large gap, however, in their thinking. They have confused racism with limited resources and

course demand. Call me an optimist, but if enough students request courses for African history, culture, etc. . . they will eventually be added to the course calendar.

Another option is simply to go to the University of Toronto where they offer many courses that are not offered at York. It is unreasonable to demand that a university (any university) offer courses in all fields. It is simply not feasible.

The sad thing about all of the misuses of the word "racism" is that it delegitimizes the true racism that still exists today on campus. True racism can be found on the walls of bathroom stalls and Ziad Hafez's election posters.

The only way to prevent the incorrect use of the word racism is for one to have the courage to come forward and correct those using the word out of context. Only in this way will the individuals who are intentionally using "racism" out of context be forced to come to terms with their own lack of understanding about the meaning of the word.

Leslie Brail

**Defense of screening "vague"**

To the editor,

As a student who is concerned with institutionalized homophobia, I would like to respond to Roslyn Herst's letter which defends the Red Cross' discrimination against gay men.

Although her letter was infused with useful information, the conclusions she drew from them were misleading, and did not justify the Red Cross' discriminatory screening procedures.

Her argument commences with the statement that "internationally recognized standards do not allow blood collection agencies to accept a donation from any man who has had sex with another man since 1977."

Herst defends the Red Cross' discrimination against gay men because it complies with another organization's standards. This type of fallacious justification is reprehensible; one form of discrimination does not, and never has, justified another. Perhaps Herst and the Red Cross should review the Nuremberg Trials.

Herst also uses the notion that "a large number of gay men . . . have been infected with HIV," in order to justify discrimination against gay men.

Her use of the word large is vague and misleading. For example, in Toronto 25 per cent of the gay community is HIV positive, which means that three out of every four gay men are potential, "non risk" donors.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the gay community has met the AIDS epidemic head on. Consequently, in 1989 (according to the

World Health Organization) 60 per cent of the reported AIDS cases were transmitted through heterosexual activity. AIDS is not a gay disease, and the gay community should not be discriminated against because of its existence.

Contrary to what Herst claims, the Red Cross does not "ask all individuals who engage in high risk activities, both homosexual and heterosexual, not to donate."

The Red Cross does not have any stipulations placed on heterosexuals who engage in unsafe sex, which is absurd. Unsafe sex, in any form, is a high risk activity, which is ignored by the Red Cross' questionnaire. Moreover, her statement implies that being a homosexual is a high risk activity, which is simply ridiculous. Homosexuality is not a high risk activity, whereas unsafe sex with anyone is.

Finally, it is important to note that the "neutral and impartial" Red Cross' handling of the AIDS crisis is pitiful. As Randy Shilts indicates in *And the Band Played On*, at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic the Red Cross refused to screen its blood supply. Consequently, innocent individuals, including new born children, are suffering today, and have died.

The Red Cross has been anything but a leader within the fight against AIDS.

Moreover, I have contacted the Red Cross to voice my concerns, and have spoken to three different individuals on three separate occasions.

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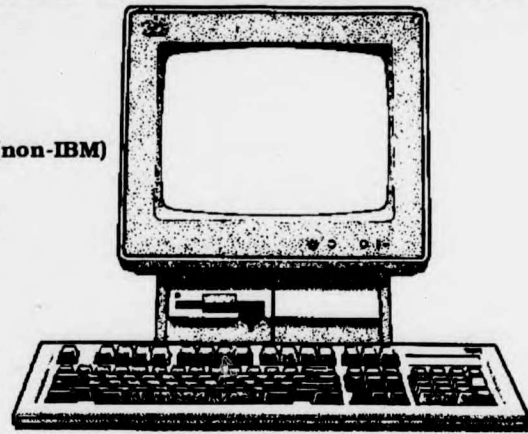
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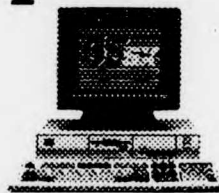
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03/10/91