

Martin
Levenson

Scientific racism risky



The shortcomings of the supposedly "free" press were revealed by its mishandling of Philippe Rushton's "evolutionary theory."

His racist theory, which rated Orientals as first, whites as second, and blacks as third on the evolutionary scale, only got the publicity it did because of the timing of its recent presentation.

Racism is an ugly word and an ugly concept. Lately, it has been topical. Incidents like schoolyard clashes and allegations of racially motivated police violence have been dominating the news over the last month or so.

The fact that racism exists in Canada comes as no surprise. One only has to look at our attitudes towards native Canadians. The fact that racist behavior against blacks occurs is news, because it goes against our national self-conception as an accepting, tolerant and egalitarian society.

For the most part, the media has dealt with these incidents in an even-handed fashion. Spokesmen of all parties concerned have been given opportunities to voice their concerns.

While there is always the danger of "copy-cat" behavior, it is important that racist attitudes be

exposed for the twisted distortions of reality that they represent. It is hoped that cooler heads will prevail, and that the frustration people feel about this issue is alleviated by discussion and, if necessary, action.

On the other hand, the media shouldn't have touched Rushton's "theory" with a ten-foot pole. It is generally ill-equipped to deal with academic debate, and tends to accord academics or "experts" with an uncritical respect that is not always deserved. As a result, we were exposed to a very one-sided argument. Finally, the media failed to raise some very important questions.

Because Rushton is an academic, his "theory" carries a lot more weight than, say, those of a Jim Keegstra or a Terry Long. This is not to say he's right, but just that he has earned more credibility. One only has to take a single university course to realize that the authority and validity of any academic can and should be challenged.

The media has no interest in publishing reasoned debate. It sells a lot more advertising or newspapers if extreme views are featured. Thorough and reasoned debate is left to the academic

journals. This is why we don't hear about research that indicates the opposite of Rushton's conclusion.

This does not excuse the media from their responsibility to question the utility and implications of Rushton's research.

I'm not a psychologist, like Rushton. But for the life of me I can't figure out why it would be important to establish a racially based evolutionary hierarchy. How does that improve our understanding of people or society?

I also can't figure out what use this is in social terms. Are we supposed to go out and change the Charter of Rights? Is his theory an attempt to justify discriminatory behavior?

Rushton's views are dangerous because they destabilize our society. Theories and views such as these should be confined to the academic arena, where they can be adequately analyzed and hopefully, refuted.

Until conclusive evidence can be presented supporting one side or the other, or until the press demonstrates a willingness to devote equal coverage to the entire debate, the media should not attempt to deal with academic research as controversial as this.

This is an argument for self-censorship, of sorts. The media should realize its limitations.

As with any freedom, the freedom of the press comes with responsibilities.

READING SKIING WEEK
with the **Downhill Riders**

- WHISTLER/BLACKCOMB**
Feb. 20 - Feb. 25
Includes:
- Return motorcoach transportation
- 4 nights deluxe accommodation at the Highland-Vale Condominiums
- Free ski hotwax
- 4 day lift ticket package available for an additional \$130/person (dual mountain)
ONLY \$229
- WHITEFISH, MONTANA**
Feb. 19 - Feb. 24
Includes:
- 4 days lifts at Big Mountain
- 4 nights accommodation at Diamond Lil's
- Return bus transportation
- Welcome hawaiian party
- Free hotwax
ONLY \$249

Downhill Riders 488-6303
The SKI & TRAVEL CO. #300, 11745 Jasper Avenue

GMAT LSAT GRE
(Graduate Management Admission Test) (Law School Admission Test) (Graduate Record Exam)

WEEKEND TEST PREPARATION COURSES
University of Alberta
Next Course:
GMAT & GRE - March 3, 4, 5

Sexton Educational Centers
PROFESSIONALS IN TEST PREPARATION

CALL: 459-7261

University of Alberta

Department of Sociology



APPLICATION DEADLINE

B.A. CRIMINOLOGY PROGRAM

A Four Year Bachelor of Arts Degree is offered for students interested in Criminal Justice System careers. The program includes field practicums where students gain first hand work experience in a variety of law enforcement and correctional agency settings.

DEADLINE

FOR APPLICATIONS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 1989

For Information Contact:

Dr. Earle L. Snider
Criminology Program Director
Department of Sociology
Room 5-27 Tory Building

Phone: 492-0468

GET UP TO GREAT SKIING, WITH OUR BED & BREAKFAST SPECIAL!

At Jasper Park Lodge, our great Bed & Breakfast Special lets you tuck into the height of Rocky Mountain comfort. And get up to the fabulous skiing of Marmot Basin!

Available seven nights a week, our Bed & Breakfast package includes one night's accommodation in our superb alpine resort. Plus a hearty breakfast the next morning. All from just \$37.50* per person.

So come for Marmot Basin's legendary runs. Or for the cross-country trails just outside our doors. Then join the fun of a sleigh ride or skating, or relax in our pool or sauna. Plus enjoy first-class dining, and lively après ski at our Bindings pub.

So get up to great skiing and value at Jasper Park Lodge this winter. To reserve your Bed & Breakfast package, call Jasper Park Lodge direct at (403) 852-3301. Or call toll-free in Alberta, at 1-800-642-3817.

FROM
\$37.50*

PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

*Rate must be requested when placing reservation.
Room tax not included. Rate available until April 20, 1989.
Package subject to availability.

Canadian Pacific Hotels & Resorts

Jasper Park Lodge

