

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Did someone say 'censorship'?

In reply to those right-wingers who are critical of the purported left-wing bias of this paper (van Velzen, Martin; *Excalibur*, March 3, 1983); if the student press in this country were to cease to be a source of dissent, it would become a mouthpiece of the ruling class as is the case in the Soviet Union. Are you proposing censorship?

Some notes as to why the left (and large segments of the centre and right) directs its anti-nuclear protest against the U.S. and not the U.S.S.R.: (1) We are not citizens of the Soviet polity and cannot hope to influence its policies, except indirectly by lobbying Western governments. (2) The U.S. developed the bomb first and remains the only nation that has used it. The Soviets, on the other hand, built up their armaments in response to the German and then the American

threat. Missiles were stationed in Cuba only after the failed American invasion of the island. The Soviets are losing badly in Afghanistan--do you think they could sustain an invasion of North America? (3) The Soviet bloc is surrounded by enemies: Western Europe to the west, China and Alaska to the east, Canada to the north, and a motley array of Islamic republics and U.S. allies to the south. The U.S. is buffered on all sides: two oceans, Canada and Latin America. Both China and the U.S. are engaged in massive arms build-up programmes. Thus, the Soviet defence budget must be at least triple the American just to keep up. (4) Capitalist economies prosper in wartime. On the other hand, in a command economy like that of the U.S.S.R. any increase in armaments (heavy industry) entails a subtraction from

consumer goods production (light industry). By forcing the Soviets to keep up with us in the arms race, we are denying Soviet consumers the kind of material prosperity that is a prerequisite for democratization. (5) Religious lunacy in Washington. Reagan, with spiritual advisors like Jerry Falwell, accepts the literal reading of Christian eschatology which foresees the total destruction of the world in a holocaust of fire. These fundamentalists believe that Christian spirits will then be reunited in a Kingdom of God. The Soviets are atheists and believe that, when someone dies; he/she dies and that's that; the proletarian paradise is not built with bombs. Given these eschatological differences, which side do you think is more likely to drop the bomb first? Some thoughts or Solidarnosc: (1) The non-C.P.-aligned left everywhere supports it. (2) The martial law regime legitimates itself on the basis of the existing economic chaos in Poland. Boycotting trade with Poland feeds repression--providing economic support is the only sane strategy at the present time.

Zenon Kulchycky

As a gay activist and the father of three children, I wish personally to take exception to the parentheses the writers attach to 'gay parents': "(we wonder how they manage it)".

The question does not of course need to be answered, nor was it meant to be; it is a tiny point, but it constitutes a real give-away as to the position the letter is coming from. What one diagnoses here is the arrogance and complacency still typical of many heterosexual males in our culture: qualities that not merely associate with bigotry and ignorance, but depend on them for continuance.

It is scarcely coincidence that the same sentence also refers contemptuously, in immediate juxtaposition, to 'deprived' feminists: heterosexism invariably consorts with straight-forward, old-fashioned sexism. Why 'deprived' by the way? If 'feminists' (one might say women generally) are 'deprived', it is men like van Velzen and Martin who are continuing to deprive them.

The letter does not need answering in detail: it undermines itself through its tone of smart-ass smugness and confident heterosexual-male superiority. It comes as no surprise that these gentlemen from Political Science appear to see a (the?) major function of a university education as the placing of graduates in 'positions within business'--where of course any tendency to question establishment values would be decidedly inconvenient.

As for Anthony Flew (in the accompanying letter), if he is going to describe the present government of the Soviet Union as 'Marxist-Leninist', he might at least acknowledge that it is a form of Marxist-Leninism that neither Marx nor Lenin would have countenanced.

I trust *Excalibur* will continue to encourage progressive thought and ideas, enlisting itself on the side of enlightenment and against oppression.

Robin Wood,
Fine Arts,
Atkinson College

Psych student praises Prof Chris Holmes

On the issue of Chris Holmes' tenure, I feel compelled to express my opinion. I'm a third year Psych. major, and have experienced lectures by approximately 10 members of the Psych. faculty. The vast majority of these are relatively similar, i.e. dry lecturing, interaction with the students, and diverse media are all utilized in varying degrees. Some professors, however, (and I will withhold names to avoid embarrassing them) seem content to spend most of the time lecturing and show little interest in how much of the material is actually being understood, and in how much thought is being provoked by the ideas. The point is, that Chris Holmes does not number among the latter. If only because he possesses such strong beliefs, he does lecture with conviction, and is highly motivated to promote understanding and questioning. The only conclusion that I can come up with is that politics are involved; and if York's primary consideration is sincerely its students, it would be well-advised to reconsider.

Randy Tischler

York profs continue dispute

I am sorry that, in response to my letter in *Excalibur*, Professor Simmons devoted most of his space not to that letter but to another. Not having a copy of the earlier effort with me in Canada, I cannot now either confirm or disconfirm my strong impression that he does not in fact address himself to what I actually said even there. But what I can see and show is that he does not engage at all closely with what I said in *Excalibur*.

My letter here concluded with a question: "Why, if not in the interests of Soviet world dominion, does any proposed disarmament have to be always strictly one-sided?" Professor Simmons begins by mentioning "your throwaway remark about Soviet world domination", but understandably prefers not to quote the sentence in which these words occurred. He then goes on a bit about the average IQ of York students and faculty. (What has that got to do with it?) He concludes by saying "that if you start throwing around terms like, Soviet 'world dominion' I can always come back with 'American Imperialism'..."

Now, first, this is not sort of answer to my question. Second, like everybody else, I am well aware that anybody can say anything; always providing they do not much care whether what they say is either true or relevant. But my question would lose none of its force even if it were

true that Soviet expansionism was exactly matched by a similar expansionist drive from the U.S.A. Third, and finally, I recommend to Professor Simmons and to all other who like me recognize that Communists can sometimes be right, attention to what Beijing now has to say about "the hegemonism of the new Tsars", not only in Afghanistan and Poland but in many other places too.

Antony Flew
Professor

P.S. Since our Philosophy secretaries all queried it, perhaps I should say that BEIJING is the new official spelling of PEKING, the spelling now used by all major Western newspapers.

'Women's needs are endless'

I agree with Karen King's comment on the prank at Central Square in *Excalibur* Vol. 17 No. 22. The needs of women are endless, and as the Director of Women's Affairs, Judith Santos should concentrate more on women's issues and ignore the silly pranks then we can all benefit from the vote of confidence we bestowed upon her.

Ellen Andrulat

Wood diagnoses arrogance

I would like to comment on the general tone of, and one or two particular observations in, the letter from Robert van Velzen and Dean Martin in your March 3rd issue.



LUNCHEON SPEAKER SERIES

The LaMarsh Research Programme on Violence and Conflict Resolution is presenting a Luncheon Speaker Series on Tuesdays throughout March and April, from Noon until 1:30 p.m. in The Gallery, Room 320 Bethune College. On Tues., March 22, Prof. Judith Posner of Atkin-

son's Dept. of Sociology will speak on "Violent Imagery in Advertising". Sharing the program with Prof. Posner will be Helen Fontaine, President of Women Against Media Pornography.

THE ERA OF REFUGEES

The Refugee Documentation Project and The Graduate Program in History present "The Era of Refugees: The Emergence of a Concept in the Modern Era" by U of T Prof. Michael Marrus on Wed. March 23 at 4:00 p.m. in Room 302, Admin. Studies, York University. Marrus is co-author of *Vichy France and the Jews*.

WINTERS COLLEGE POETRY

M. Michael Schiff, Bruce Hunter and another poet will be reading in the Winters College Senior Common Room, Tuesday, March 22, at 5:00 p.m. All are welcome. Free. Schiff is the recent winner of "the most promising playwright Mavor Moore Award", and is poetry editor of *Existere* magazine.

PIXOTE

This Sunday Night at Bethune: *Pixote*, directed by Hector Babenco, dealing with Brazil and the plight of delinquent orphans. Iacon Davies will talk about Brazilian cinema. 8 p.m. in the Bethune College J.C.R.

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