

# Racial favouratism is racist, says reader

The letter that appeared in York You, Buddy (February 12) made me aware of a danger I had previously thought a right.

The nameless authors begin

their non-hatemongering, non-slandering and non-politicking letter by saying that they fear speaking their opinions, because they believe that those people who

laud the white civilisation, slandering others, are condemned (perhaps unjustly) as racist.

However, by the end of their letter, they try to justify criticisms of other races. I refer to the statement that "it is not Nazi or antisemitic to speak out and criticise Jews; they are not above it." Maybe I am not as insightful as the authors, but I fail to see a connection between their original premise of the right to praise a civilisation with their latter statement, that is, the right to criticise minorities. The reason I fail to see this connection is simply because it is not there.

I also see an inconsistency with the statement made by one of the nameless authors who said he or she carefully avoided saying anything antisemitic in history class, while expressing the view that Israel uses the "extremely exaggerated" figure of six million dead to extort money from West Germany. I cannot help but believe that the person responsible for such an insensitive remark was not as careful as they could have been. More to the point, how does that statement praise any civilisation?

I am of the firm belief that favourable comments made about some civilisations invariably leads to criticisms of others. After all, the only reason one civilisation or race would be favourable in

anyone's eyes is that the others are just not as good by comparison. Unfortunately, praise and criticism, are used as conjugate pairs.

It would be no small accomplishment for humanity to appreciate a great achievement for its own sake, without having to point the comparison finger at others, believing them not to be of equal ability.

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that freedom of speech and press may be getting out of hand. Until those in control of the media learn to play down criticisms of races (or even individuals) and to build up only praiseworthy actions, their rights to freedom of expression should be limited.

The limitations should, of course, apply to the ordinary citizen, because it is out of that mouth where the sounds of hate can first be heard.

Unlike the authors of the letter I took exception to, I am unshamed to affix my name to mine.

Ian Robert Schlifer

## A 'whole earth' of charlatans

Thanks for Chris Rowland's article (Feb. 12) on the "Whole Earth" fiasco. I found it an incisive

analysis of both the strengths and the shortcomings that one finds in an event of that nature.

Karen Lewis remarked in her article that "Whole Earth" afforded the opportunity for those "not interested in political rallies or religious sects, to get out and participate in an enjoyable event." I would argue, however, that the experience of "Whole Earth" was for many participants a deeply religious one, complete with high priests, sacramentals, and a liturgical ritual all its own.

Let's be realistic — any movement or position worth its salt, whether it be Transcendental Meditation, Socialism, Christianity, or awareness of "planetary responsibility", has to be debunked from time to time in order to clear away the stale air and also to weed out the host of charlatans and false messiahs that latch on to the ideological bandwagon.

Rowland took the unpopular position of playing the devil's advocate. His arguments were clear and critically insightful and I found his candor refreshing — particularly in light of the platitudinous double-talk one is subjected to from the other side of the fence. More power to him.

Tim Kidwell

### CYSF column

## Course unions fill gap

The inadequacy of the college system in providing campus-wide services, led to the creation of the CYSF in the late sixties. Under the terms of its creation, the financing of cross-campus student services as well as the task of providing leadership and cohesiveness for the entire student body, was made the responsibility of CYSF.

Given the present situation, the council has over the years, only partially fulfilled its goals. It has been highly successful with respect to non-academic student services, but lacks the resources, both in manpower and financing, to serve the academic needs of the York student body.

To fill the gap, course unions developed within some departments. These course unions, though still in the formative stages, are beginning to provide what the CYSF and the colleges have failed to deliver. They have given the students a voice in the departmental decision-making process of this institution, and, it is hoped, they provide the students with leadership and comradery within the bounds of their own academic disciplines.

The multi-dimensional purposes and functions of the course unions may be stated as follows:

- To maintain a close rapport between students and faculty through the election of student representatives to departmental or faculty committees
- to provide for constructive and socially responsible criticisms of the department or faculty by the students in order to give them some control in the direction of their education and to stimulate more interest with regards to their own fields of study
- to aid the students in "knowing" their department by conducting courses evaluation and publishing the results
- to provide the students with a sense of esprit de corps and identity by encouraging a common aim and providing programmes of common in-

terest to its members (films, speakers, etc.).

Under the present CYSF financial allocating scheme, the departmental and/or faculty student unions are treated like any other club or organization. However, in view of the fact that their existence is of greater academic importance to the students in general, they must have an unobstructed access to funds.

In addition, the Council must recognize the fact that course unions are not merely of an academic and political nature, but also of a social one. It has been our experience that without the necessary funds to maintain the social aspects of the course unions, the unions' membership declines rather than swells.

Therefore, the need for the establishment of a separate financial pool is of great importance for the continuity and the maintenance of course unions.

In order to establish such a fund, it is necessary to pool together existing funds from both CYSF and the college councils. To this end, it has been proposed that each of the college councils and CYSF allocate the sum of 25 cents per full-time and part-time student.

These monies will be administered by a three-member Grants Commission, to be composed of a representative of the CYSF, a representative of the college councils and a representative from the caucus of the various departmental and/or faculty student unions.

One of the most important functions of strengthening course unions is the previously mentioned organization and publication of student-controlled course evaluations. Depending on the co-operation of the various college councils, CYSF intends to run a trial evaluation in some college tutorials. At any rate, next year, if the above plan is implemented, it will be conceivable to run a complete course evaluation.

George Manios



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