

Bomb scare ends seminar



Graphic/Shear

LETHBRIDGE, Alta (CUP) — Because of objections from faculty and threatening phone calls, University of Lethbridge has cancelled a seminar that was to have featured Jim Keegstra, convicted of promoting hatred against Jews.

U of L education professor Colin Thomson said he invited Keegstra to speak October 18 to

his class on racism in Canada.

"I have a Keegstra file I use as a textbook," Thomson said. "It made sense to me to have him attend a class in person to be challenged by the students."

Thomson said nearly 250 other students and faculty wanted to attend the seminar so it was moved into a bigger hall. No media were to attend and only the

fifteen students in the class would have been allowed to question Keegstra.

"I couldn't let Keegstra bring his Neo-Nazi philosophy here without challenging it," said U of L sociology professor Dean Frease spokesperson for the U of L ad hoc Committee to Fight Racism.

"The whole format of the seminar was bizarre," Frease said. "We were to sit there for 75 minutes with no objections from the audience. This would have infringed on my freedom of speech."

U of L dean of education Eric Mokosch said Keegstra's visit was strictly a class project.

"It was not an open forum for Keegstra to spout his views," Mokosch said. "Keegstra would have been questioned by the class. We do not share his beliefs and the class would have made that abundantly clear."

"I don't think Keegstra would not spout his views, Frease said. "If Thomson wanted to maintain a classroom atmosphere he should have limited it to a class instead of renting a hall."



Thomson said he and his students were threatened with physical harm unless the seminar was cancelled.

"Anonymous phone calls can be most unpleasant," Thomson said. "One caller offered to burn a cross in my front yard."

Thomson said he is disappointed the seminar was cancelled.

"We lost a chance to do a real public service," he said. "Apparently my students' intellectual

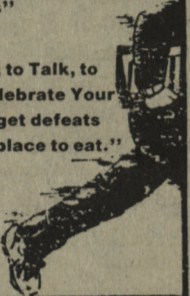
and academic courage is to be circumvented by a 'let's not ruffle feathers' approach to learning and teaching and to the pursuit of truth."

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