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Toward One World... Majesty of Intelligence and Moral Honor Considered Essential to Man

By QUIRINUS BREEN
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I am, as every man is, by inclination an isolationist; a worshipper of the idols of the cave and tribe. But it has been rumored that I am no longer safe, no matter how comforting my idols try to be. I have come to believe this rumor. The most responsible scientists and statesmen tell me I had better believe it. In fact, it is commonly held that there is safety in nothing short of Willkie's "One World" or something very like it. This is a pretty tall idea. I should like to think it realizable. The more I think about it the better it looks. But then I realize that perhaps I was born thirty years too soon. When I was in college nobody worried about one world. I grew up in a tribe in which everybody felt secure in his cave.

What Kind of World?

Were I asked to advise a student interested in one world, I should

tell him first to develop a concept of what kind of a world he could love so as to be completely devoted to it as a man of rich intelligence and whole sentiments. The sense of panic that so often accompanies talk about one world has dangers, for it comes from a too exclusive preoccupation with physical safety. Important as this may be, a man must bear in mind that he has a dignity that repels the notion of mere safety. We should want safety compatible with the majesty of intelligence and moral honor. Of concern with this dignity of man, there has always been a strain in our culture. I should want my advisees to share this concern. If this were lost it were hard to make a case for the preservation of the race, for it were no longer the human race about which one were talking.

How?

I should further tell such a student to inquire from specialists as to what suggestion is offered in

their respective fields for implementing the idea of one world. For example, we know that western Europe had one world of a sort in the Middle Ages. What part did the medieval philosophical realism play in its making? History tells us that the Romans made one world of the lands of the Mediterranean Basin. How did they do it? The political theorist should throw light on the ideas and practices pertaining to the expansiveness of citizenship beyond national borders. There is also a history of practices pertaining to world languages (Greek, Latin, and Arabic). The student would find that his concern with one world is not something peculiar to the twentieth century. While he should not be advised to copy any previous attempts, he will by study of them be enriched in his reflection on the subject. And rich thinking is always essential to the achievement of the best.

Gotterdammerung?

If the Affiliated Students association meeting Thursday night was any indication of the true attitudes of Greek politicians toward campus politics, the coming election, and the University as a whole, then the Greeks have been sold down the river.

If honesty, integrity, loyalty, and brotherhood are the ideals to which the fraternity system is dedicated, then the Greeks have prostituted themselves to the interests of a small minority group.

If clear-thinking and rational consideration for the interests of the University of Oregon are attributes of groups or individuals who claim to be the cream of the student body, then the cream has gone sour.

* * *

The fraternity and sorority representatives at that meeting acted for the most part like a herd of blank-eyed, muddle-headed sheep with wool over their eyes being led around by their noses.

The old double-cross, the old stab-in-the-back seemed to be the accepted treatment for free-thinking "brothers." But we are here concerned more with issues than with individuals.

This is the logic employed by the Greek leaders:

1. The purpose of the Greek party is to place Greeks into positions of prominence on the campus, with the welfare of the student body as a whole merely a secondary consideration.

2. Candidates must be chosen primarily for their vote-getting possibilities. Such matters as their leadership ability, their competence as executives, their interest in promoting the University as such or in democratic student government as such, their personal attitudes toward political platforms or ethics or responsibility or service to the University—these things were barely mentioned, much less seriously considered.

3. Yell kings are unpopular, therefore poor material for political positions; Tom Hazzard is a yell king; therefore he is unpopular and unfit for a political career. His service to the school, his extensive activity record, his sincere concern for an active and purposeful student government, his intolerance of TNE, scarcely entered the discussion.

4. Athletes are popular therefore vote-getters. Stan Williamson is captain of the basketball squad; therefore he is the logical choice for president of the student body. The administrative duties of a president, his ability to impress high school students when traveling with the Oregon Federation head, his capacity to organize and get cooperation were taken for granted—evidently the ball tossing skill of a man insures all of these other factors.

* * *

When the Emerald editor mentioned that Bernie Hammerbeck, sports editor, and Art Litchman, director of the athletic news bureau, had described Williamson as a well-liked man and a fine athlete, Don Malarky, Sigma Nu president, jumped to his feet, said that Hammerbeck and Litchman were Independent politicians and made other untrue and slanderous statements about the sports editor. Litchman and Hammerbeck actually are completely disinterested in politics.

The Emerald editor pointed out that the Greeks would only lose prestige and whatever respect of the campus they now had, if Greek candidates later proved to be incompetent student body officers. Bloc Leader B. G. Cox retorted that it was more important that the bloc be "kept together" by the simple method of "passing around" student positions from house to house—the merit of the candidates evidently considered secondary, although Cox did emphasize the importance of

running the best possible Greeks for each job. He failed to mention that the Sigma Nus have had two student body presidents in the past eight years. Another paradox was the fact that the same group which last year backed Hazzard to the hilt as a campus leader, etc., this year would have nothing to do with him. The fact that Hazzard had forfeited support from the Greek leaders this year because he had refused on certain occasions to "play ball" with the TNE boys was also not brought up.

Instead Malarky denied that Williamson had any association with TNE, and accused the Emerald of publishing false and misleading statements. The general attitude seemed to be: if Theta Nu Epsilon is running the Greeks, so what? However, a Greek leader had confidentially told the Emerald editor that he "was tired of being told what to do" but was too deeply involved to "talk." He said he did not want to jeopardize his chances for a good job after graduation. This significant matter was not brought to the attention of the bloc, either... naturally.

Finally the time came to put the Emerald editor on the carpet. And while Wilbur Craig, president of Alpha Tau Omega, laid on the whip, she was about as alone as an illegitimate at a family reunion. Craig brought up the infamous Wright editorial which questioned the merit of all mothers wearing halos, and this was tossed back and forth by persons like Bob Daggett, Junior Weekend chairman, who declared the editorial was a disgrace, etc. The relevance of this discussion to a political meeting was never made clear.

* * *

It was implied that the Emerald editor was disloyal to the holy cause of Fraternity in the recent political editorials which were regarded by the bloc as designed to "split the Greeks." The editor explained that her only purpose was to break the undemocratic control of TNE and to encourage independent uncoerced rational thinking as a prerequisite of democratic action in a purportedly democratic student government. She said the Greek system was betraying its ideals by its association with TNE. When she declared that the main objection the Greeks had to her editorials was their truth, she was answered with hostile stares and pseudo sophisticated giggling.

Craig demanded to know how the Emerald editors were chosen (by the educational activities board, of course), and appealed to the bloc to find some way to "control the Emerald." He deplored the fact that so many Emerald editors seemed to be "independent." He did not mention the fact that in the past eight years only two Emerald editors were Independents. Bud Jermain, Beta, was editor in '39-'40; after him came: Lyle Nelson, Sigma Chi; Helen Angell, Tri-Delt; Ray Schrick, Delt; Marjorie Major, ADPi; Anne Craven and Louise Montag, Independents, and Marguerite Wright, Sigma Kappa.

Why have these Greek editors, with the exception of Jermain, consistently run head on into Greek opposition? Possibly because the editors are usually well-informed enough and intelligent enough to resist and resent any attempt by minority groups to "gain control."

As for "controlling" Editor Bob Frazier next year, Larry Lau gave the bloc the low-down on that angle: "Frazier is one of the most level-headed, clear-thinking, fair-minded men on this campus, and if you think you can tell him what to do you'll find you've run into a buzz-saw!"

That is what happened at the ASA meeting Thursday night.

It is most discouraging to realize that the fight this year is nearly over and nearly lost. It is most disheartening to be forced to conclude that the Greeks have lost sight completely of their vaunted ideals, and make light of the very sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. It is ironic to be forced now to stand back and watch the Greek gods saunter recklessly into their twilight.

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