

Don't close the elections

California's Jerry Brown shook a few people up with his last minute presidential campaign during Oregon's primary. People are still shaking.

Brown ignited a campaign that attracted many to the polls who'd never been there before. In the general election, Jerry Rust did the same thing. Many of these two's supporters tuned into the election process simply because an attractive candidate had been provided them. To vote, many had to take advantage of Oregon's liberal voter registration laws.

Wednesday, the House Elections Committee held its first hearing on a bill that would amend the current laws. Presently, Oregon's citizens can register to vote up to and including election day. It's a good system and any attempt to change it should be carefully scrutinized.

The bill the committee heard, HB 2087, would require anyone wishing to vote to register at least 20 days before the election. The change was recommended by a legislative interim committee, and it's a bad idea.

Oregon's new registration laws are part of a nationwide trend designed to open up the political process. More and more state governments are taking an active role in getting their citizens to the polls. People never involved in the election process before turned out in 1976, and much of the credit must go to the new registration processes. If Oregon's registration law is amended to include a cut-off 20 days before the election, the simple fact is the state will be disenfranchising large numbers of voters.

For many people, politics is less than an overriding concern. For some, it takes a Brown or a Rust to spur them to vote. To deny these people the right to vote because they don't have the political consciousness of their neighbors is an elitist approach that must be scorned.

The highly transient classes of our society, students and lower-income types, benefit a great deal from election day registration. Why should they be given less voice because they move into an area or become excited about an issue the day before the election rather than 20 days before? There can be no answer, except that some would just as soon this segment of the population wasn't represented on election day.

Admittedly, the long lines outside county elections offices caused problems on election day. There are other problems with the system, but that's to be expected of something that's only been used twice. Maybe the state needs to provide financial and other help to deal with hassles encountered by local elections officials, but whatever the solution, it shouldn't deny even one Oregonian the chance to vote on election day.



opinion

West German McCarthyism

It is our democratic duty to inform students at this University about some present political tendencies in West Germany which we find are dangerous for all true democrats.

In 1972 a decree on the employment of so-called 'Radicals' in the Public Service was adopted by Chancellor Brandt and the various State Premiers. This was to exclude from Public Service, including the teaching profession, all those "working to destroy the West German Federal Republic from within" (as the premiers see it).

As recent statements by at least one regional government (Hamburg) and by numerous opponents to the decree are making apparent, the executive order is frequently misused to apply a form of control over political attitudes. The state government of Baden-Wurtemberg has admitted that it has run more than 50,000 so-called loyalty checks since the decree has been applied. This bureaucratic surveillance, says the London Times, "can easily develop a will of its own and produce a German version of McCarthyism."

Even the Social Democratic Party's presidium that helped to pass the decree, now expresses its "concern ... that a climate of general suspiciousness is created." Suddenly it's enough to have participated in anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in the 1960s, or to live together with a communist in a community, to be caught up in this vortex of snooping.

One of the staunchest critics of the decree, Nobel prize winning novelist Heinrich Boll, sees it as an instrument that forces people into "humiliating conformity or hypocrisy. It is a decree against hope, an edict of hopelessness and paralysis." The federal ministry of the interior, pleading state autonomy, says it does not know how many candidates have been vetoed. Official estimates are around 450,000. Opponents of the procedure have collected the names of about 500 applicants who have been rejected so far, including teachers, university lecturers, social welfare workers, and lawyers as well as engine drivers. Most of them belonged to the Communist Party (DKP) or other communist groups which are not banned from our constitu-

tional law. It is impossible for these people to find a job in private industry.

Opponents of the "Berufsverbote" decree point out that former membership of the Nazi Party, even of the SS, is no obstacle to high rank in the civil service. As German theologian Gollwitzer said in last December: "A new fascism, should it come, would have other colours and ideologies than the earlier one. But there are analogies, even at the early stage increasing harassments of uncomfortable gadflies then as now and increasing attempts to drive people into a corner, where they can be labelled criminals."

We are much concerned about the disciplinary effect that the Berufsverbote have caused. Few people dare to sign a petition for Amnesty International or a pamphlet against environmental pollution nowadays as these people know they could get into trouble for that. In the seminars it's the same: students don't think it wise anymore to express critical opinions. Some people have even resigned from our National Union of Teachers, which is said to be rather left-wing. Besides, there is a trend to exclude active communists and socialists from trade union membership.

The difference of the Social Democrats and the Christian Democratic Union is only one of degree. The Christian Democrats have already announced that in case they should win the general election they would extend the decree to all clerks and workers in the public service. We tell you these facts now, because we think that especially the German people should pay the closest attention. One fascism is enough!

Therefore we seek to inform U of O students and the (university) public about the facts given. International reaction and solidarity can be very useful for us as many solidarity committees in France, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Canada and the USA show.

If students should be very interested we would try to send you more informative material.

Hartmut Heinze,
Students' Committee
Department of English
University of Hannover

Letters

A private right

In reply to Edward Marhart's letter opposing abortion (20 January):

I am opposed to abortion, at least in cases not involving the health of the mother; not on religious grounds or for any reason beyond my own convictions. But I am a man; whatever the outcome, the issue will never dictate whether or not I use my own body as I see fit. Unlike Mr. Marhart, therefore, I certainly do not consider it my business or my right to impose my opinions (note the word, Mr. Marhart) through 'legal' means on those who would reject them for reasons at least as valid as my own. The Supreme Court has decided the legality of the question in such a way that those who disagree are free to act accordingly as far as they themselves are concerned. This issue of abortion is not and should not be subject to something as absurdly irrelevant as majority rule; that would be justice in no sense of the word. Nor should it be in any way a Constitutional issue; it is not a question of 'greatest good for the greatest number,' even though there are those among us presumptuous enough to claim to know what that is.

Human life is a sacred gift, and I sincerely hope that the time will soon come when no one begins the giving of that gift through accident or ignorance. But if there is

indeed such a thing as a right to life, a fetus does not have that right until it can, within limits, sustain its own existence (and beyond that point the law gives no one the power to take that life away). Until that point is reached, it is the right, and the moral obligation, of the mother alone, to choose—and not lightly—whether or not to fully bestow that sacred gift, bearing in mind all the consequences of either choice.

Michael E. Stamm
Graduate Student-History

Origin of 'alien'

As my husband is a resident alien, I was interested to see your article on the alien residency deadline in the Jan. 21st edition of the Emerald. Of particular interest was your speculation on the origin of the word, 'alien.' I think you would find through further investigation that the German *alein* does not in fact derive from the same root as alien itself. For one, the Latin *alienus* originally comes from *alius*, meaning 'other' (compare our *alias*), rather than 'alone'; also, I would tend to think that the origin of the vowels in the two words is dissimilar as well.

In addition, the Anglo-Saxons had an entirely different word to signify 'foreigner'—this was 'wealas', which they used in a rather derogatory fashion to designate those Celtic inhabitants of the British Isles who had occupied

the lands for many centuries before the Saxons' arrival; these are the people whom we know today as the Welsh. The Welsh themselves called their own people by an entirely different name—'cymru' (pronounced cum-ree), meaning 'friends'.

Jo Pye
Administrative Assistant
State System of
Higher Education

Diet restricted

It seems rather ridiculous that as a dormitory resident I am paying for full board when half of the money I spend is for frivolities such as staple foods. For example, after living in the dorms for two weeks I had spent \$120 on food related items to fend off malnutrition. Seventy dollars of this was spent on a refrigerator so that I could have fruits and vegetables

every day that hadn't been frozen and boiled or canned and sugared until there was no nutrition or texture to them. The other \$50 went to staples including whole grains, nuts, seeds, etc., not available in the dorm cafeteria, so that I could maintain my minimum protein intake since I am a vegetarian.

Before the first week passed here, I went to see the food service director of Hamilton complex, Ms. Harrison. I asked her if there was any way to obtain the necessary raw produce, whole grains, nuts, etc., to maintain my dietary preference. She immediately made it clear that under no circumstances would she cater to people with weird ideas about nutrition (such as myself and the 20 or so other vegetarians in the system). She even went as far as asking me, "Couldn't you change your way of thinking temporarily?"

That was four months ago. I have tried to maintain my health

but my money and resources are limited. I am tired of walking into the dorm cafeteria and discovering powdered egg souffle to be the only vegetarian dish served for lunch. I propose that the dorms, in addition to improving their vegetarian menu, should establish a plan through which a dorm resident can pay for a small number of meals per week, or, if the person so chooses, no meals at all. As it stands now, one must pay the mandatory 100 per cent board charge now being assessed. Also, the dorms should establish a communal cooking and eating area for those students not wishing to eat in the cafeteria. I shouldn't have to risk spilling food all over my floor or have to disturb the R.A. to use his kitchen in order to maintain the necessary function of eating the food of my preference.

David S. Seres
Freshman-Biology