opinion

ASUO stumbles in attack on RCYB

Local members of the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade appear ready to be martyred over a civil-rights issue; ASUO officials appear eager to hasten that martyrdom.

RCYB cadres say they won't abandon their fervant proselytizing via information tables and displays in the EMU despite their abrupt suspension Friday by ASUO student affairs directory Terry Vaughn. Vaughn and lame-duck ASUO President Ramon Herrera have indicated their willingness to have the RCYB members arrested if the latter attempt to exercise their suspended "priveleges" in the EMU.

The confrontation reveals ineptitude and personal whim on the part of the ASUO personnel involved; for the RCYB — who are no slouches at seeing tactical advantage — the situation promises publicity and even popularity where before their views usually received only bemused indifference or rejection.

Ostensibly, the RCYB suspension stems from that group's violation of a sign code. The circumstances of the suspension and statements of ASUO officers, however, suggest that other motives are at work.

Vaughn suspended the RCYB soon after he had rather

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improvidently broken up a loud discussion between RCYB members and visiting high school students. Vaughn himself acknowledged that policing EMU debates is not his job.

If anything, robust discussion represents a desired goal of a university setting, not its anathema.

Vaughn and Herrera both point to the RCYB's long-standing feud with the ASUO over placing posters in "unauthorized," campus locations and claim the group has most recently been in violation of the sign code since January. But Herrera, in discussions with the Emerald, demonstrated not only his unfamiliarity with the guidelines supposedly involved, but his inability to locate where in the EMU, ASUO or University regulations the sign policy is to be found. He referred questions about the policy to Vaughn, who refused to comment on the matter.

Instead of discussing the merits of the apparently rather obscure sign code, both Vaughn and Herrera focus on their personal battle with the RCYB. By thus revealing the ideological origins of their objections and actions against the RCYB, they fuel that group's charges that the contested regulations represent only a pretext for persecution.

Already considerable student support for the harrassed young radicals has developed in reaction to the excesses of power seemingly being exercised by the ASUO. Pressing the attack further will only tend to discredit the student leadership more, especially if, by the selectiveness of the application of regulations, charges brought against RCYB members are overturned in court.

Implicit in any code governing written, oral or other forms of expression lies the potential for abuse of basic freedoms.

In a Dec. 1 editorial on another (apparently unrelated) University sign code, we wrote, "No difficult mental gymnastics are needed to see that this policy could . . . stymie organizations with displays in the EMU . . ."

By holding a more or less permanent violation of a sign code over the RCYB, the ASUO is doing just that. Instead, student leaders should re-examine not only their motives as regards the RCYB, but their commitment to ambiguous sign codes that may be used to disrupt civil rights.

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Boyd on Atiyeh

To the Student Body:

The purpose of my letter is to speak to the issue of Governor Atiyeh's selection as speaker at the June Commencement.

First, some background: The committee which supplies this office with a panel of names from which speakers are chosen includes three students named by the ASUO Executive Office. Their role, like that of their faculty and staff counterparts, is to solicit from classmates the names of potential speakers to be added to the pool from which panels are composed. Moreover, the entire University community is, from time to time, invited to make recommendations.

The Atiyeh nomination was suggested to me by a faculty member who expressed the hope that Oregon could be the first university in the state to be honored by the Governor's appearance. Regarding the nomination as excellent, I passed it on to the committee. When I received clearance, I issued the invitation, offering alternate dates of the winter or spring commencments.

Governor Atiyeh's acceptance of our invitation was regarded as a compliment to the University of Oregon. In this respect, he is in the company of his predecessor, Governor Robert Straub. My hope is that the tradition will be continued into the future.

No governor is elected with unanimous support, but each has been the choice of the people whose University this is. Governor Atiyeh has been particularly responsive to the students of this University, revising the excutive budget to lower tuition for resident undergraduates. Beyond that, he has pledged a higher priority for collegiate education, a move which will ultimately improve the value of any degree you receive from Oregon.

Those who wish to coerce him into refusing the invitation by the embarrassment of the petitions being circulated, charge that he is conservative. Governor Atiyeh represents a broader spectrum than that or he would not be our Governor, but that whole point is irrelevant. There are no political, religious or ideological "Test Acts" which persons have to pass to be eligible to speak at this University. That has been our pride.

Many will remember the Gus Hall incident, which proved this University's devotion to principles of free speech for the entire range of opinions. And this year has been one in which our invited speakers have included Victor Atiyeh, Harry Bridges and Andrew Young. Every one of those names draws protest from some part of this Univeristy community, but we can be proud that all three — and many others of disparate views — used this campus for the expression of their positions. May such freedom and range of ideological expressions always be the hallmark of the University of Oregon!

The dissenting "Quacks," as they call themselves, object to the Governor's political positions. I hope this letter has addressed that argument adequately. But they also raise another point: that graduation belongs to the senior class.

Surely, the senior class deserves special attention at commencement. Its members are not the only interested persons, however, as many master's and doctoral degrees are also conferred at each exercise. But I would not quibble over how much influence the senior class should have. If there were senior class officers, I would now confer with them about the issue. That tradition was abandoned two or three years ago, however, so I shall consult with the outgoing and incoming ASUO presidents to seek their counsel on proper student involvement in the selection of future commencement speakers. If the present system needs reexamination or change, I have no objection to trying something new.

Meanwhile, the present system has led to the selection of a speaker in whom we can take pride, whether or not we share his views on any of a variety of subjects. I hope you will join me in making the Governor know that he is welcome on the campus, which is also his alma mater; welcome not merely by those who agree with him, but by all who are willing to listen to all arguments before coming to decisions on any issue.

Governor Atiyeh is a public figure. He has survived past opposition and he will survive that of the moment. But I hope we all cooperate to let Oregon know that its University is not only an open forum, but a gracious community, as well.

William Boyd
President

Holocaust day

The Emerald of April 24 carried a lengthy notice about the commemoration of the Holocaust on that day. While the rememberance is gratifying, especially to those who survived and still carry the memory of that period of martyrdom and suffering, certain aspects of the commemoration activities on this campus or rather, certain aspects of the rationale given in the announcement, leave one a bit perplexed.

Whether Elie Wiesel, is or is not "the world's foremost author on the holocaust," is certainly open to debate since it leaves out the whole of a literature, much of it, unfortunately, still not available to the English reading public. What is certainly false is the statement that the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began on that day (April 24). The uprising began, in fact, on April 19 and lasted for more than six weeks during which the mostly young fighters of various ideological persuasions celebrated the traditional Jewish holiday of freedom from bondage, Passover, as well as the First of May, a symbol of international solidarity.

For well over thirty years now Jews the world over, including former ghetto fighters, veterans of partisan warfare and concentration camps have marked the day of April 1 with a lighting of six candles. Why April 24 should become now the offical Holocaust Day in the Jewish calendar is more a matter of politics (reflecting to a degree certain attitudes toward the "diaspora" and the life that was aborted so tragically) than historical accuracy.

Perhaps some deeper probing into one's consciousness and soul and the implications of our acts are in order before we act.

Joseph Fiszman
professor, political science

'Thinking rite'

I were walking down Agut Street today an I saw sine on windows of Hamilton dormetory who say "Rite on Boid, throw more than pies." Then something like "We don't want no faggots." I thought "Hooray four those boys who put up sines. Limp risted queers shouldn't get no IFC money shouldn't even be alloud on campus."

Reminded me of 1960s when people wanted allou negrows to be like us whites. Made me mad matter of fact I still mad. Maybe we oughta get rid of them there coons after we get rid of stupid fairys then start on kikes an wetback to.

I like what Presidunt Boid do telling queers they wrong to have kissun booth. That good I hope he keep up good work an let us soodents take care of evrything.

Jess Barton
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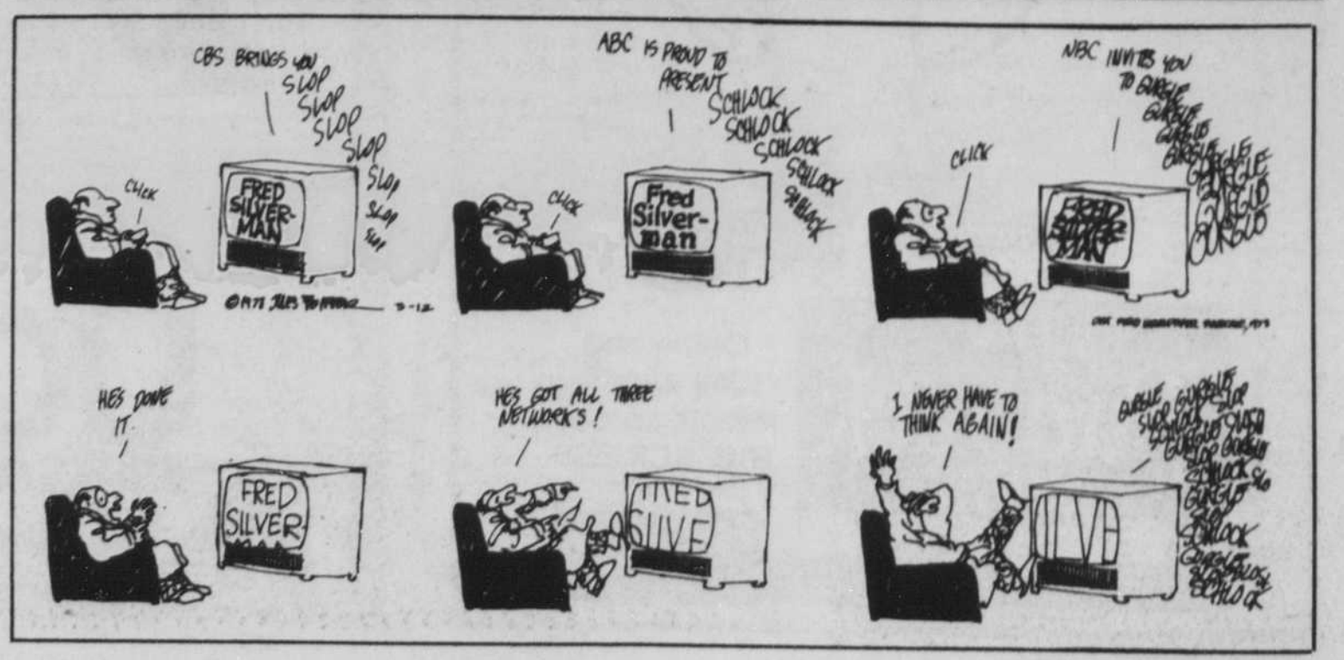
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