

cort fernald

## back pages

The recent arson conviction and subsequent suspended sentences of RCYB members John Kaiser and Nancy Whitley brought to a close that group's *cause celebre*. Being an old-time leftie, I followed the trial with more than passing interest — although, with something of a jaundiced sidelong glance. The trial proceeded according to the usual theatrics set forth by activist trials from the 1960s-70s... with the usual imperialist props and dialogue of repression and peoples' justice miscarried... all in the especial white of television lights and the cacophony of camera shutters. It's good to see the traditions of courtroom drama being reverentially upheld by the young Turks.

I interviewed two RCYB members in September and was slightly chagrined with their politics. On one question I had to coax for the answer I wanted. "You do believe in armed revolution, don't you?" I asked. "Oh, uh huh, yeah sure," they replied.

A friend described Eugene as a "hotbed" of political activism. Though, from what I've seen so far, Eugene is tepid at best. I've been in hotter beds.

Reading the Yellow Ribbon trial reports and watching the EMU-patio-RCYB-road-show made me recall old friends from the time political activism was as much a part of maturation as getting sick on Colt 45 malt liquor.

Fast Fred was from an upper-middle-class family who lived in a suburb of Detroit. One year in Ann Arbor and he was a confirmed White Panther and a zealous follower of the MC5. Fast Fred dragged me out of heroin addiction and hurled me into the revolution. Perhaps I owe him my life. Though, when he needed to figuratively "die" to escape federal prosecution, I had the blank papers for his new lease on life. Perhaps we're even.

Annie was Fast Fred's *convivant*. She was 16 years-old and a Berkeley radical reared between Sproul Plaza and Ashby Street among the seamy street people of Telegraph Avenue. Annie's father was a tweedcoat, or a goatee, or a pipe — something other than a human being who lectured on Sociology to dozing freshmen. I gave her my M-1 carbine for her seventeenth birthday. Annie lived with Fast Fred for a time, and then pursued her feminism to its ultimate — marrying another woman.

Wendy was from New York City, our liaison to such groups as Armed Love and Up-Against-the-Wall-Motherfuckers. She wouldn't tell me much more, but Wendy could field strip almost any weapon in seconds. There's not too many questions worth asking a woman while she's tearing-down a Kalishnikov. Wendy had the eyes of an ingenue and the grace of a panther. She and I spent the nights thrashing about only to wake the next morning as distant as two deputies of the politburo.

We were a cell — a Mao tse tung study group. We'd sit around theorizing on the revolution, meanwhile practicing the politics by feeding poor kids in the Fillmore District a hot breakfast before school, or collecting clothing and groceries to distribute to welfare families, or arguing tenant's rights with slum lords. Remembering the craziness of riots, and the guns, sometimes embarrasses me. However, I'll always be proud of the things we did in the community.

We probably won't see the likes of such political activism in the United States in the near future. Kaiser and the RCYB are the estranged children of a radical hysteria. They are the more moderate second generation. This is also true of groups on the right, such as the YAF. They are the well-behaved prodigy of past right-wing excesses. And in a very definite way, politically active groups, right or left, deserve our respect and all we can do to ensure their existence. The climate of diverse political sentiments strengthens this singular American democracy.



## letters

### Keeping afloat

Who is it that controls Oregon's higher education? It's those who have the money to help keep it afloat. Who is it that has the money to help keep Oregon's higher education afloat? The major timber corporations and the military (ROTC). What are the primary functions and aims of the major timber corporations and the ROTC? To tear down the forests (for quick profit) and to teach young people to kill, maim and destroy. So, by simple logic of the transitive property (if A equals B and B equals C, then A equals C) the functions and aims of those who control Oregon's higher education are to tear down the forests for quick profit and to teach young people to kill, maim and destroy. Interesting thought, isn't it?

Christian Gunther  
Junior, sociology

### Yellow ribbon

I would like to state that the political validity of the yellow ribbon burning (as an act that exposed the CIA and U.S. imperialism and clearly stood with the people of Iran) has been vindicated by many developments. The charges of first degree arson, the trial that was carried out, and the guilty verdicts; all that has been done to these defenders, has been done carefully. These actions by the state have been carefully planned and timed to yield the most powerful response possible to undermine the strength of this political action. There can be no doubt that the court at

least has realized the validity of this act, and that they see the danger involved in allowing such acts — which expose the system — to be seen in public.

Another reason the act was valid politically is that although some groups claimed that their protests were ruined by the yellow ribbon burning, they had, in fact, not made any such plans public, and did little or nothing to inform the public or campus that Victor Tomseth was even coming, let alone what it could mean to aware protestors.

The yellow ribbon burners did make the presence of the CIA on campus a well-known fact. They did accomplish a well-phrased protest, in public, where someone had a chance to hear and see it, or hear of it and be involved in public debate over the questions brought out by Tomseth's visit, and they are currently facing sentencing as a result of this action and political, alias, convictions. This calls for support — of the RCYB if you wish — but, certainly of the act of political demonstration.

Molly Widmer

### Equal time?

Equal time for evolution and scientific creation in the classroom?

The article in the Emerald contained several more or less severe flaws.

Trivialities first:

What science in high school is about is the consensus of the majority of scientists about the current understanding of our world, usually with a delay of about five or ten years. The majority of the scientists think that the history of our planet and the development of life thereon can presently be described most accurately in terms of evolution. If the "scientific creationists" think that they are right, they will eventually convince their colleagues at some time, and there is no need to legislate one thing or the other. A decade earlier or later is insubstantial.

So far divine intervention in the course of history of our planet has been notoriously elusive, as if the creator did not want to leave any track thereof.

Since "scientific creation" is by no means an equally well

founded alternative to evolution, it deserves not as much time in the classroom as the latter, at least presently.

"Reason cannot come from non-reason, no matter how many billion years one waits"

This sounds good, convincing, absolute, true.

Incidentally, what is reason? How does it work, at least in humans? No one knows that today. We are barely getting a glimpse at how the periphery of our and other brains work. We are just beginning to understand, how seeing and hearing works. The question of how they develop can only be addressed once we understand them. There is, however, presently no reason to assume that we will never be able to figure out how reason works, although it may take a long time (a century or so, but that is insubstantial).

Now the solution to the question about the philosophical flaw: Our present limit of knowledge has been mistaken for some inherent boundary of knowledge, without any supporting evidence.

The Catholic Church found out about the validity of the assumption, in a particularly painful way: They were on the "retreat" for the last four centuries, as scientists ignored any objections to their pushing the limits of our knowledge further and further.

The problem with "scientific creation" is that it is mostly disguised evasion of some hard philosophical work: What is our position in the world, in the universe, in relation to God, if evolution accurately describes our origin.

Nikolaus von Bargaen  
Graduate Student in Geology

### letters policy

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