

# Groups fight to revise culture

Statewide meetings are being planned by the American Civil Liberties Union to alert Oregonians on what the organization calls threats to civil liberties in Congress. "The threat to civil liberties is greater today than it has been in decades," said ACLU's national director Ira Glasser. As great as the threat to civil liberties is a concerted effort by fundamental religious groups to reevaluate and change the very essence of this heterogeneous culture.

Fundamentalist groups from the conservative camp are attempting to revise the rights of each individual in this society. They are circumventing and attacking the Constitution on all-too-many fronts — all in an effort to dictate to the society as a whole how it should live and believe.

The news media and more moderate political groups are underestimating the dangers of the fundamentalist revision of society. It requires only a cursory glance at recent news to see that fundamentalist groups are active across the nation.

In Austin, Texas a group nearly succeeded with a city ordinance that supported housing discrimination because of sexual orientation. Only the voters, by a substantial margin, prevented the proposal becoming law. That the group managed to have this repressive ordinance even on the ballot encourages other groups in other cities.

The most vehement forces in the abortion controversy are from the fundamentalist enclave. They are part of the legislative battle over a woman's right to control her body.

The fundamentalists have long been in the public libraries demanding certain books be restricted or banned outright. They have been encouraged by school libraries bowing to their pressure and taking certain books and periodicals off the shelves. While it is true some material is not suitable for school libraries — some titles attacked rank as important works of literature.

Book clubs have resorted to a rating system similar to motion pictures. Possibly the X rating for sexual matter in books is the result of pressure.

There is the recent situation in Eugene and Springfield with adult bookstores. Much of the overreaction of the District Attorney and local police was fueled by the fundamentalist group behind the protest against the Springfield book store.

The public schools have been the scene of bitter fights over prayer. The fundamentalist groups are now redefining curriculum intent on throwing sex education back to the age of superstition. They are in the courts attempting to legislate what theory — or theories — of evolution will be taught.

Fundamentalist groups are setting up their own colleges and universities and restricting entrance to those of acceptable racial background and creed. Only last week the IRS ruled that Bob Jones University was qualified for a tax exemption even though they had a policy of racism. Public outcry caused Pres. Ronald Reagan to order the ruling reversed. It waits resolution.

While fundamental religious groups aren't bad in themselves — rather, fundamentalist groups are some of the strongest fibers woven into the fabric of American culture. It is only when these groups outstep their bounds and dictate their specific ideology for all people that they become other than benign.

These are pessimistic times and the optimism of the fundamentalists is to be applauded. The belief in an ultimate good triumphing over evil is essential to the mettle of a culture. However, ideological good is a concept that can become an ultimate evil when dictated for all according to the narrow strictures of one vision.

The fundamentalists are strong — and their actions must be questioned again and again. If no one questions their intent it raises the spectre of a society of regimented people, who think as they are told, and believe in the beliefs instructed them, who feel as they are ordered to feel, and live in gray concordance with the static doctrine of a legislated morality.



'BE CONSOLED BY THE FACT THAT THESE HERE AMERICAN-BUILT COMPACTS ARE QUITE A BIT SAFER THAN THE JAPANESE MODELS... THEY SPEND A LOT LESS TIME ON THE HIGHWAY.'

## letters

### 'Blacks'?

For many years I have been irked by the designation "black" applied to Americans varying in skin color from lighter than Sammy Davis Jr. to darker than Huddy Ledbetter, and I am delighted to find Cort Fernald putting the (to me) offensive word in quotation marks.

What's wrong with "black"?

1. Few Africans are so dark-skinned as to be properly called "black."

2. Few Afro-Americans are "pure-blooded" Africans. Most of our "blacks" are one-quarter, one-half, or three-quarters "white."

3. To call a person "black" because she or he is one-half or one-fourth or one-eighth African means that blackness is, for better or worse, more potent than whiteness. It is to pay respect to the Old South in which only pure whites were considered real human beings having rights. But, intellectually, it is just as easy to consider blackness positive as negative. (I think no one should consider his or her skin color an indication of superiority or inferiority.)

Actually, the reason for the nationwide use of "black" for off-white is the anti-whiteism of militant "blacks" and the fear on the part of the media of offending them, plus the fear of seeming non-liberal or narrow-minded.

The only perfect term for describing skin color is "brown"; but Africans aren't the only brown people. People aren't white or black or red. One term that could be used practically is "colored." After all, there is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(to which I belong).

We might use "Afros" as distinguished from Anglos, Chicanos, Cubans, etc.

Laurence Hawkins

as capable of great brutality.  
A.E. Brettauer

### Porn: yes

There seems to be a consensus by some that pornography, or "obscene materials," should be banned. As a student of the University, I feel outraged that a group of people want to prevent me from buying what I want. Yes, I mean pornography. I am not happy that someone is trying to push their morals on me. I am especially angry at the harassment of the local bookstores and the contention that pornography is dangerous to people. In a way, they're right. Some people come in contact with pornography, go crazy, and decide that other people shouldn't come in contact with pornography.

Since there are so many people standing up for their rights to abolish pornography, I'm standing up for my right to buy, possess and read it. In other words, I give my full-fledged "chickenshit approval" (as Suzy Downs calls it). I reserve the right to read or buy any obscene material available. If anybody sees a reason why I shouldn't, they are free to come to me and talk about it. This is more civilized than raiding bookstores, harassing bookstore owners and customers, name-calling, vandalism, and Bible-quoting (Incidentally, Bible-quoting doesn't work with people who don't believe the Bible).

I feel secure enough about my life that I feel no need to control what you read. Please don't try to control what I read. It will only make me mad.

David M. Wood

### Poland debate

Regarding the preference of the Reagan Administration for the stick over the carrot toward Poland as unconstructive I went with moderate expectations to last Wednesday's symposium on land. All along it has been my hope that exchanges of opinion taking place at universities would be dedicated to honest fact finding rather than to passions. However, the innumerable discussion on Iran dominated as they were by intolerant faithful undermined such hope. The debate on Poland uprooted it further.

I expected to find on one side Jozef Fizman as a representative of Give-The-Communists-Hell-At-Every-Opportunity School, and the ubiquitous Al Szymansky on the other, with a moderate in between. I was not prepared for Szymansky and an amiable lawyer, obviously more competent on the party line than on Poland, to gang up on the third participant.

In conclusion I'd like to say, I marvel at Szymansky's unique ability to sandbag listeners ignorance of history (as most students are) and to confuse those who should know better with far-out statement that the Communists had taken over Czechoslovakia by free elections. Their coup d'Etat of 1948 is as much part of Al's unmentionables as is Katyn, Soviet betrayal of the Warsaw uprising, and anything else which makes the Soviet appear

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