

letters

Question

At last a "hero" Israeli captain visits Eugene "to educate Americans" that Christians in Lebanon, as he declared, were actually the ones who massacred the Palestinians and that — antisemitically as usual — Israel fell victim of "the world's media coverage of Israeli military actions" in its invasion of Lebanon.

Unashamed, Avishay conceals all motives and consequences of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the massacre of thousands of human beings and the demolition of Beirut. And yet he dares to say it is important for Americans to understand why Israel invaded Lebanon and that "Israel was innocent!"

Finally, he justifies Israel's invasion of Lebanon because Israel couldn't tolerate attacks from the Palestine Liberation Organization.

But now that the PLO has left Lebanon (seven months ago), a challenging question persists: Why is Israel still occupying Lebanon? A question, the "hero" captain escaped.

Amer Alaghbari

Race relations

The sociology department, sometimes labelled "liberal," or even "radical," acted in a typically reactionary fashion on March 1. Two years ago, spurred by student pressure to develop a stronger race relations program which would also serve as a recruiting device for racial minority students and faculty, this department voted overwhelmingly in favor of filling the next faculty vacancy with a person whose major emphasis would be race relations.

At this time, there is only one faculty member, albeit an excellent one, whose emphasis is race relations, thus making this extremely relevant aspect of sociology an under-committed one.

Yet, when this vacancy occurred, the job announcement posted read "social psychology and/or race relations."

And on the list of candidates at Tuesday's department meeting only three out of the eight candidates in the final draft had a major emphasis in race relations. The remaining five candidates had a major emphasis in social psychology and no emphasis in race relations.

A few days prior to the last meeting of the hiring committee each member received a memo from the head of the department, Ben Johnson. The memo reinforced an emphasis on social psychology. One can only speculate on the memo Johnson got from Richard Hill, the vice provost for academic affairs. Hill is also a full professor in the sociology department with an emphasis in social psychology.

At the March 1 meeting there were protests from graduates, undergraduates and faculty that the "turn of events" had excluded excellent race relations applicants, who had no emphasis in social psychology. Furthermore, as a graduate student stated, the department

may be liable for suit because of the hiring procedure.

The issue of race relations is being skirted. For two years hiring someone in this field had been a top priority. This priority was nullified by a memo (or memos), irresponsibility (or ignorance), and self-interest.

One person on the faculty voted "nay" to the motion to go on with the nomination. He is the only person of color on the faculty. A vivid lesson in race relations.

Kevin Barclay
sociology, women's studies

Threatening

The sentiments and fears of Eric Stillwell, the political science student whose letter to Soviet leader Yuri Andropov appeared in the Communist Party paper Pravda, are characteristically American. Stillwell's concern that "the CIA will probably start spying" on him (though not unfounded) struck me as being primarily symbolic; symbolic of an era much like the 1950s.

Today, just like then, being labelled a "communist sympathizer" is serious business. Why? America's present circumstances provide a good answer.

American people today are frustrated — frustrated by unemployment; frustrated by a deteriorating economy and frustrated by growing social injustice. In essence, they are frustrated by the fading of the American dream.

Like all frustrations, these too need outlets. The barrage of gut-level simplistic nationalism and aggressive anti-communism emanating from the White House has provided one such outlet.

The United States vs. them syndrome is something Americans can identify with. It helps us forget what we don't have and remember what we do. "At least we've got our freedom..." "We're still a lot better off than they are..." "It's the communist system that makes them so much worse off than us..."

Before you know it, the American nightmare disappears and the dream seems real again. It makes me wonder though, can there be an American dream without a Soviet threat? Somehow I think not.

In essence, the publishing of Eric Stillwell's letter represents a threat to the Soviet threat: and to many Americans, that in itself is threatening.

Christian Gunther
senior, sociology



WARNING: THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS DETERMINED THAT SUSPECTED POSSESSION OF TICKETS TO MOVIES CRITICAL OF ACID RAIN AND NUCLEAR WAR, MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH.

your turn

Our semester system

On Feb. 3, the Emerald informed us that the semester vs. the quarter system discussion had begun. Only six hours later, the Senate (comprised of Student University Affairs Board members and select faculty) voted to support a proposal from the faculty to adopt a late semester system.

Students who may have realized that contact with their SUAB representatives was crucial, were pressured for time to act; the student body's only voice in the issue at the Senate meeting was the SUAB, and the Senate voted on the issue the very same day students became aware of it.

Unfortunately, many people (ourselves included) didn't know that students elect one peer from their department to represent the student body within that department on issues similar to this one. We didn't know how or why we should look for our SUAB representative. We realize students must take some responsibility for keeping themselves informed.

The SUAB works hard, but to represent us it needs our input. We feel, however, that there has to be some way for SUAB to make itself and its function more widely known. Somehow, more open communication must be established between us all.

On March 2, only four weekdays later, the University Assembly (comprised of SUAB and the entire faculty) met and voted in support of the late semester system 169-124. Students who were not members of SUAB did not have speaking rights at this

meeting. The faculty, which seemed to already know what it wanted, rushed the decision-making process by closing the discussion after one hour, and voted. In less than a week, we bid "aloha" to the quarter system.

While we favor the University's current system, we can see the value a semester system offers. We believe the faculty generally supports the semester on the premise that it offers the student a better, more in-depth education. When given the choice between early or late semesters, however, all other student concerns have been overlooked, and the faculty chose a system which benefits themselves.

Their decision seems to revolve around the "weather issue" which argues that late August/early September is the nicest time of year and we shouldn't have to spend it in school.

Granted, it would be nice to be out in the September sun, yet, not at the expense of taking finals after Christmas break. Nobody wants that dark cloud hanging over their head during an otherwise festive season. Wouldn't the faculty also benefit from a four week Christmas break, as is typical of the early semester system?

Semester breaks, which under the late semester system would occur a little less than a month after Christmas, also presents some difficulties. Any money students would save from not having to purchase books for a third quarter etc. would probably be spent trying to enter-

tain themselves during this extraneous 10-day break. Out-of-state and foreign students surely can't afford to go home again and dorm residents might be charged for staying over the break. This two-week vacation would be better off being consolidated into a four-week Christmas break, typical of the early semester system.

If the fall term began two weeks earlier than proposed, allowing us to take finals before Christmas, Spring break would suffice as a vacation and we would finish earlier in the spring.

The late semester system cuts off two weeks of summer job income. The current system terminates in mid-June (as will the late semester) at which time many other students have had first crack at the job market. Although they begin their summer positions two to four weeks before we do, the quarter system allowed us to work a full month after they got back to school in the fall.

A student can earn anywhere from \$200 to \$600 in two weeks, which is money a poor student and a poor university needs. A typical early semester system begins late August and ends mid or late May. This would give us an equal opportunity to seek summer employment.

If you, as students or faculty, are in any way unhappy with the Assembly's decision to convert to the late semester system, then please take some sort of action. The decision to support this system will not be official until the State Board of Higher Education approves it in April.

We still have time to voice our concerns. The State Board of Higher Education has an office on campus located in Johnson Hall. We urge you to write them a letter expressing your own views. If you see a petition asking the SBHE to reject the proposal, please take the time to sign it.

A transition has been proposed which will affect the entire University community. Let's make sure we make the best decision for all of us.

Lani Nicholson
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