

opinion

Seeing the light better late than never

How ironic it is to witness the late-in-life ideological transformation of many prominent social and political figures. The irony is that many of these public figures were directly responsible for shaping the world and now they disavow much of their handywork.

The poet Robert Frost once said he was conservative in his youth and became radical in his old age. For most, the opposite course, from radical youth to conservative middle-age, is true. But the number of senior conversions is increasing.

There's the conversion of Admiral Hyman Rickover. Rickover, testifying before Congress on the eve of his retirement, called for the abolition of the Defense Department and predicted the world would destroy itself in a nuclear holocaust. Rickover is considered the architect of the modern navy and pioneered the nuclear submarine. What's ironic is that Rickover repudiated his entire career.

The latest conversion is Robert Strange McNamara, former head of Ford Motor Company, president of the World Bank and secretary of defense under presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. Those are impeccable credentials.

McNamara has been peering over the shoulder of the Reagan administration and disputing its foreign policy. He warns of nuclear annihilation if the Soviets and the United States don't get a handle on arms control.

McNamara writes in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, "Nuclear weapons serve no military purpose whatsoever. They are totally useless — except only to deter one's opponent from using them." Obviously McNamara isn't a hardliner, but he believes it imperative the superpowers reduce nuclear arms — to "almost zero" — to eliminate reliance on nuclear arms as a deterrent.

Last year McNamara joined with George Kennan, McGeorge Bundy and Gerard Smith to dissuade NATO from its first use policy. McNamara disagrees with NATO's "flexible response" strategy that allows for NATO to use nuclear weapons if losing in a conventional attack against Western Europe. It's important to note that McNamara was one of the architects of NATO's "flexible response" plan.

"It would be an act of suicide," McNamara says of any launch of nuclear weapons against the Soviets. And the opposite is true, as well.

McNamara is now calling for Europe to become a "nuclear-free zone" and for NATO to replace its reliance on nuclear weaponry with nonnuclear (conventional) forces. If NATO were to proportionally reduce nuclear weapons while increasing conventional forces the Soviets may become more willing to negotiate arms reduction.

There's much knowledge to be gained from these prominent figures who, late-in-life, suddenly repudiate the goals of their career. And like that old line that those who do not understand history are doomed to repeat it, sometimes the wisdom of our elders is ignored.

ERA vote in House tells women to wait

Woman — you keep still and wait. That's the message implied by the House of Representatives' 278-147 vote against the Equal Rights Amendment Tuesday.

But what's more discouraging than the continued waiting (the vote was but six shy of the two-thirds required for passage) is the despicable actions of House Republicans who sought to sabotage the ERA with an anti-abortion amendment.

The controversy over attaching these "Hyde Amendments" (named for Henry Hyde, R-Ill. a member of the "4-H club") to the ERA bill literally killed the possibility of its passage.

The House was split into partisan camps. Oregon's representatives voted along party lines. Republicans Denny Smith and Bob Smith voted against the amendment. While Democrats Jim Weaver, Les AuCoin and Ron Wyden voted in favor of the amendment.

So we wait and take heart only in that 1984 is an election year and those who opposed the ERA can be voted out of office.



"WADDAYA THINK OF THAT? MY DEAR MOTHER CALLED AND SAID, 'GEORGE BUSH — IF THIS COUNTRY EVER USES THAT NERVE GAS, I'LL JUST DIE!'"

letters

Advantage

Persons opposed to the Solomon Amendment seem to agree that it is wrong for the government to take advantage of America's youth through draft registration. Yet, these same people take advantage of the American people through student loans, grants, and work study programs. When one asks a favor of the American people to loan one free money, one should be willing to do something in return, including placing oneself on call in case of a national emergency.

There is an inconsistency in people who believe it's OK to take advantage of government social programs paid for by our hard earned tax dollars, yet don't think it is OK for the government to require anything of them. First of all, the receipt of government aid is a privilege, not a right. In denying financial aid to non-registrants, therefore, how can any rights be violated? You are simply losing the privilege of receiving aid.

Thus the issue of the Solomon Amendment is not constitutionality at all, since it is not a question of rights but of privileges. I believe that the law is fair and should be extended to welfare programs as well. Freeloaders should have to repay their debt to society, and national security is a good place to start.

Brandon Shepard

Arms limit

Like many others in the University community, I support nuclear arms limitations. I have no desire to become one of several billion chunks of well-done steak. However, I believe it is unrealistic to expect peace to be a result of arms limitations.

Long before the first plow-share was forged into a sword, humans killed other humans with sticks

and rocks. Over the years, humans have become more efficient and spectacular in their methods of killing, but in some ways the differences between neanderthals and modern humans are minimal. The veneer of civilizations is very thin. Observe what happens when the power goes out in New York City.

Limiting nuclear arms will reduce the destructive power of humans without reducing their destructive impulse. Of course, not all humans are violent, but more than enough of them are. Violent conflict is here to stay. It is realistic to expect arms limitations to reduce the cost of conflict but not to eliminate it. A lack of sophisticated weapons never stopped humans from killing one another.

But don't get me wrong. I'm not a pessimist.

Steve Reinschmidt
graduate

Bandwagon

It seems that a majority of the people in the United States have jumped onto a bandwagon of endless ridicule and protest.

Leslie Hunter's letter (*Emerald* Nov. 8) asked University students if they were eager to fight for the United States in Grenada and possibly return disabled. She continued by painting the American position as that of a blood thirsty culture. The main point of her letter, unless I am mistaken, was that the United States was wrong to invade Grenada.

Although I am unsure of our nation's right to take such action, I hesitate to protest it for one simple reason — I don't have a better solution. Hunter never stated an alternative solution, just like most of the other protesters that are so vocal in their criticism of Pres. Ronald Reagan.

Protest is fine, in fact it's one of our rights as American citizens. But, it's also very important to have an alternative in mind before opening your mouth. I for one would not have wanted to make a decision concerning Grenada. What if Reagan didn't send in troops and a majority of the American students on the island were killed? People would have criticized him for not sending troops in.

Finally, I'd like to address Hunter's implication that communism may be better than democracy. I would gladly live in poverty in America instead of living in luxury in Russia. And yes, I would die for my country. I might

be hesitant to die in a foreign country, but if we were invaded I would be one of the first to enlist. It's the least that I can do for the U.S., which also happens to be the greatest nation on the face of this planet without a doubt.

Stuart Samuelson
freshman, journalism

Bigoted

Recently there has been a profusion of letters, columns, and articles in the *Emerald* which exhibit bigoted fear and lack of understanding toward gay men and lesbians. I am not criticizing the *Emerald* for publishing these articles; I applaud it because this exhibits in a public forum the kind of elements in our society which gay people must fight and organize against.

There are many people who deny the existence of threats to the civil rights and personal safety of gay people. The homophobic articles in the *Emerald* are proof that the gay liberation movement has a long way to go before achieving the goal of living our lives without great fear of oppression and invasion of privacy.

To legislate or moralize against gays assumes the right to control the private lives, living conditions, and freedoms of association of all people. Such a right is not allowable in any just society, and any tendency in that direction must be focused on and protected against. Gay people ask for the right to live our private lives according to our nature (which does not interfere with the private lives of others) without fear of oppression. The oppression stems from a minority of fascists and other bigots, and their opinions are sadly impossible to sway toward ones of harmony and tolerance.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the remainder of society to ensure that these reactionary voices do not drown out the voice of tolerance and charity, the way they managed to do in Nazi Germany.

Rolf Erik Sjogren
junior, history

Clairification

Many readers noticed the letter of Nov. 15 entitled "Send'em in" was a song by Tom Lehrer, but wondered if Lehrer had sent the letter. In fact it was submitted by Terry Neill. We regret any confusion that may have resulted.

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