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Author's birthday commemorated

By Frale de Guzman
 Emerald Reporter

In the struggle, my sympathies were not neutral. But in telling the story of those great days I have tried to see events with the eye of a conscientious reporter interested in setting down the truth.

— from "Ten Days That Shook the World," by John Reed

Artist, adventurer. Words that aptly describe the complexities of Oregon-born author, political activist and Communist party-organizer John Reed. In spite of his radical views, Reed's popularity has spread worldwide.

To commemorate the birthday of this unorthodox man, a centenary symposium will be held today at 4:30 p.m. in 180 PLC.

According to symposium coordinator Douglass Card, a graduate teaching instructor in Sociology, a group of eight speakers made up of University faculty and local residents will address Reed's complex personality. Topics will include the exploration of Reed's Oregon background, his work as a labor organizer for International Workers of the World and

the impact of his two books: "Insurgent Mexico," about the Mexican Revolution, and "Ten Days That Shook The World," about the Russian Revolution.

Additional topics include Reed's role as a link in current Soviet-American friendship programs and a modern view of Reed in the Soviet Union. The latter will be presented by Russian guest professor Liudmila Aleksandrovna Naumenko.

Reed's life could very well have been the plot of an action novel entitled "Western kid enters Eastern Ivy League College (Harvard) and becomes radical," Card added.

Reed's popularity escalated after the publication of "Ten Days That Shook the World." Reed's objective coverage of the Russian Revolution earned him a place of respect among the Soviet people and helped to strengthen the friendship ties between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Although Reed was an avid supporter of the Bolsheviks and their attempts to overthrow Alexander Kerensky's democratic socialist government, Reed still succeeded in objectively presenting the views of all parties involved, according to Card.

However, upon his arrival in the United States in 1918, Reed established the Communist Party before returning to the Soviet Union, where he died of typhus on Oct. 17, 1920, three days short of his 33rd birthday.

In tribute to Reed's memory, the Soviets buried him on Soviet grounds. "He is the only American ever buried in the Kremlin Wall," Card said. However, his ties with both the Soviet Union and the U.S. has helped forge a bond of friendship between the two nations.

"John Reed is the symbol of the link between the Soviet Union and America," Card said. That sentiment was echoed by Time magazine writer Richard Corliss, who described Reed as a "journalist and playwright, Harvard cheerleader and Moscow radical, consciousness and hell-raiser."

According to Corliss, Reed "embraced contradictions as he ran like an Ivy League halfback through an archetypal American life — full, frustrated, tragically short. He knew everybody, did everything. His life was a passionate sonnet scrawled on a Wobbly poster — and when he finished the poem he died."

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scrutiny by her neighbors.

Illustrating his point that hunger is more often the result of politics than the lack of abundance, Steele described a situation in Angola, a war torn African nation.

"In Angola, women and

children are the target of the rebel forces," Steele said, noting that women and children produce 70 percent of the food in Africa. Anti-personnel mines are planted in the farms, and the effect is reflected in the fact that Angola leads the world in amputees and infant mortality rates, Steele explained.

"So they sit, hungry, surrounded by a circle of plenty because they do not wish to lose an arm or a leg," Steele said.

Steele charged that most governments spend too much on their militaries and not enough on hunger. "We just give money to the military if they're going to do all the right at all times," he said.

Last Friday morning, a teleconference was broadcast at the University live from Washington, D.C. Authorities from the United States, Peru, Kenya and Norway discussed issues related to world hunger during the three-hour event, sponsored by the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

"Two million U.S. farmers carry a debt of almost \$200 billion," said Anne Kanten, a Minnesota farm leader. "Until farmers can sell their food and make a profit, we are going to

have hunger."

Hernando De Soto, founder and director of the Institute for Liberty and Democracy in Lima, said the legal system is a major impediment to the hungry and poor. He said every working day more than 100 new rules are created in Peru.

"The cost of law to the poor is enormous," De Soto said.

After the teleconference, Guy Burton of Clergy and Laity concerned, and Carolyn Frengle, director of Food for Lane County, spoke briefly to the gathering of 15.

"The root of hunger is inequitable land distribution," Burton said. In Latin America, coffee is grown where food once was because it means more money for the landowners, he said.

"We also need to look at the connection between hunger and militarism and racism," Burton continued. "We have a huge military to protect a few people's interests to the detriment of the Third World."

Addressing the issue of hunger locally, Frengle said Oregon has the best emergency food distribution in Lane County. She said a quarter of the population qualifies for emergency food.

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