

Don't turn over state GOP to lunatic fringe

Mainstream Republicans should be wary of Oregon GOP chairman Craig Berkman's call to form a new party. The Oregon Citizens Alliance is on the verge of taking control of the party, Berkman said, and the only alternative for "real" Republicans is to split off and form a new party.

Berkman and other Republicans need to consider the ramifications of such a move. Giving control of the state GOP to a group of crazed lunatics would create a political nightmare.

Too many voters fail to look beyond the party affiliation of political candidates, and when they see the word "Republican" next to a person's name, they will vote for that person. These Republicans will not stop to learn if a candidate is an OCA puppet. They will not necessarily question an OCA-supporting candidate's agenda.

Berkman believes that most Republican politicians will join the new party, tentatively named the Independent Republican Party. If enough registered Republicans join the new party, it may gain the accreditation of the national Republican Party.

The challenge is to convince enough Oregonians to put their faith in a new party and to hope for acceptance by the national leadership. But what if it doesn't work? What if senior Republicans such as Bob Packwood and Mark Hatfield don't join up?

Berkman should do nothing until he has the commitment of all major Oregon Republicans. It would be even better if he remained to fight the OCA for control of the party.

Berkman should follow the example set by the Democratic Party. For years, the Democrats were controlled by liberals who were considered too extreme for American voters. Conservative Democrats banded together and formed the Democratic Leadership Council.

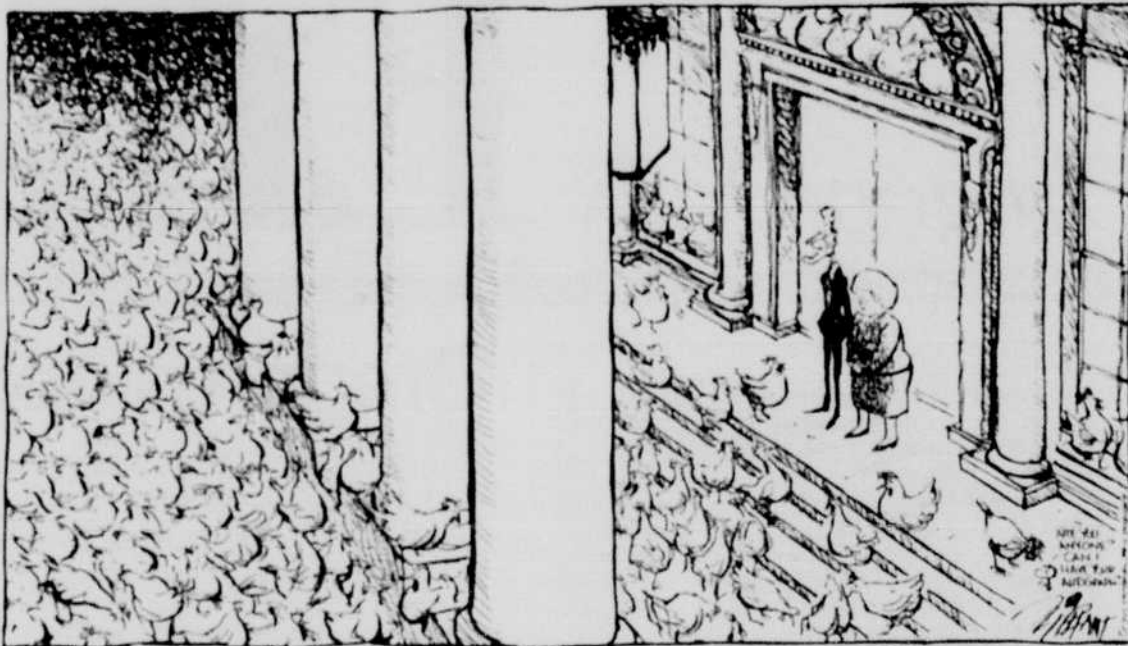
The DLC took control of the party and put Bill Clinton and Al Gore in the White House. Clinton is a member of the "New Democratic Party," as is Gore and party chairman Ron Brown.

Berkman should muster what moderate forces remain within the state GOP and begin an internal cleansing. The potential damage an OCA-controlled party would wreak upon Oregon is unimaginable.

Virtually every credible Oregon Republican politician denounced Ballot Measure 9. But if the OCA gains control of the party and Republican politicians become OCA puppets, the threat of fundamentalist legislation getting passed will grow profoundly.

The OCA and its members are as far removed from the Republican Party's ideals as are Communists. The OCA has confused people into mistaking fiscal conservatism with moral conservatism.

Berkman should make certain that his actions will not create more harm than good before carrying out any reformation. Whatever happens, it is in the best interest of all Oregonians, Democrat and Republican, for the OCA to be rendered powerless.



EITHER ALL OUR CHICKENS CAME HOME TO ROOST, OR THIS IS THE ARKANSAS TRANSITION TEAM.

COMMENTARY

Multiculturalism's mixed message

By Ryan Blacketter

With the awareness of cultural pluralism on campus, multiculturalists have rejected the decidedly Eurocentric philosophy of traditional academia. Racial intolerance is a problem on many campuses and multiculturalism, in part, addresses ways to alleviate this difficulty. However, sometimes multiculturalism exacerbates racial tension, and its advocates are often guilty of intolerance as well. Whites are often portrayed as the sole perpetrators of "insensitivity," and rhetoric that is divisive and racist when espoused by minorities is excused and even embraced.

In his book, *Illiberal Education*, Dinesh D'Souza illustrates the potential "tyranny of the minority" at many universities. Leonard Jeffries, director of African-American Studies at New York City College, warned his students that the "ultimate culmination" of the "white value system" is personified by Adolf Hitler. He further asserted that the white gene pool has been polluted as a result of exposure to the ice age. Black genes, however, enjoyed millenniums of motherly nurturing "by the value system of the sun," he said. Jeffries was not disciplined for his overt racism. Rather, he was praised by many civil rights proponents and invited to co-author a multicultural curriculum for New York state public schools.

Too often, racist views are accepted when articulated through the mask of color. When Jesse Jackson gave a speech to a crowd of 5,000 on the EMU lawn, he spoke of racial tolerance and instructed the faithful to "keep hope alive." However, after the Los Angeles riots, many Americans lost hope for Jesse. When Bill Clinton exposed Sister Souljah, a black rap musician, as a racist for imploring rioters to burn down the houses of whites, Jackson scolded Clinton for race baiting. Jesse, racism is wrong, period, even when it is espoused by minorities.

At this university many students, primarily middle-class whites, wear T-shirts entitled, "Love See No Color." Aside from being ungrammatical and trendy, this message contradicts a central tenet of multiculturalism; namely, multiculturalists believe color is of paramount concern in affirming one's culture. Some black students on campus wear T-shirts with, "It's a black thing, you wouldn't understand" inscribed across the chest.

These students don such slogans in reaction to a perceived intolerance on campus, which is accurate to some degree. But the message these T-shirts convey certainly isn't a plea for cultural harmony. They seem to say, "We have affirmed our culture based on the color of our skin. You could never understand us, so let's remain separate." In other words, multiculturalism does see color. I cannot fathom the uproar that would ensue on campus if white students wore T-shirts entitled, "It's a white thing, you wouldn't understand." They would rightfully be regarded as white supremacists.

An attitude prevails on today's campuses that all "people of color" share resplendent lineages that can be traced to an indigenous utopia where people were compassionate and sensitive. But the legacy of some cultures of color does not trumpet such indigenous hospitality. Upon capturing pris-

oners of war, the Aztecs killed their enemies and stretched their stomachs to a four-foot radius to be used for new drum sets. And dominant African tribes kept slaves well before an introduction to the West.

Through a multicultural lens, Western civilization is the sole oppressor of humanity and its only legacy is the extermination of indigenous people. Columbus, testosterone frothing from his mouth, spewed the corpses of the innocent across the plains of the New World, etcetera. We are taught to despise the "dead white males" who forged the course of the Western world and to dismiss all of their achievements as the product of racism.

Such historical revisionism has taught many minority students to feel victimized and helpless. A Hispanic student in a Comparative Literature course of mine viewed the reading list, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Homer's *Odyssey*, as a white, patriarchal indoctrination. When the class watched a film depicting Odysseus' return to kill the suitors, she commented that the interpretation was archaic. A truly "progressive" analysis, she said, should focus on the racism of the Western world, illustrated by Odysseus' bludgeoning of Cyclops, a creature she deemed emblematic of oppressed people everywhere.

I hope white students who encounter the writings of Frederick Douglass on their class reading list do not regard the experience as merely a political subjugation of another's cultural dogma. His autobiography illustrates the perseverance of the human spirit a he managed to educate himself as a slave. This should be an inspiration to all students regardless of their culture.

Radical multiculturalists in the classroom have learned nothing from Douglass' fight for inclusiveness, as they do not tolerate those who dissent from their orthodoxy. In an American history class I took, a white student admitted that he actually admired Western civilization, and worse, he even liked American culture. His words were met with a barrage of accusations, all of which asserted "racism" and "lack of intelligence."

However, racism is not endemic to Western culture. Compare the white student's "racism" with this statement by Afrocentric poet Wanda Coleman: "There is this war of the gods going on between the dark people of the world and the fair-complected people of the world. The dark people will win, eventually, simply because we've been endowed with a genetic gift (*Emergency Horse* magazine, summer 1992, pg.8)."

Racism festers on both extremes of the political spectrum, and the walls of bigotry that divide our campuses must be destroyed. But we must challenge racism everywhere, even when it is found in the rhetoric of minorities. If multiculturalists do not practice acceptance of Western culture, their mission of sensitivity and tolerance will fail.

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