

# OPINIONS

## College policy protects discussion, not hatred

by Kevin Moss

*Editor's Note: The author is an instructor in the Russian Department and an adviser to MGLBA.*

A racist would find Middlebury College's harassment policy particularly extremist in regard to its condemnation of racial slurs; an antisemitic would find it extremist in its protection of ethnic and religious groups. In last week's letter to the editor David Upham finds it extremist in regard to speech opposed to homosexuality. The language of the college policy protects all equally: "any form of harassment that insults the dignity of others is not accepted." Blue-eyed people need not fear that they may be victimized with impunity.

Careful reading of the harassment policy shows that it specifically protects discussion of sensitive matters and expression of opinion. Nothing is banned, nothing is prohibited, no one is coerced. The tenets of Roman Catholicism are safe, unless there is one I do not know about that says, "Thou shalt call thy neighbor 'fag' and use insulting and derogatory language." The policy describes a range of types of behavior which may be addressed in a number of ways by the community. There is no threat to the free exchange of ideas.

Thanks, Mr. Upham, by the way, for your idea of the "eye color" analogy: on the one hand being homosexual should be considered no more morally reprehensible than having blue eyes. For some reason, though, no one seems to object that their first amendment rights are infringed upon because they can-

not abuse blue-eyed people. And what are the slurs, derogatory comments and disparaging references to blue-eyed people that one might protect anyway? Why is it everyone keeps using only one example? Could it be that first amendment rights are not really the issue? Could it be that the real issue is intolerance of homosexuality?

Intolerance has a history. The Nazis sought to exterminate Jews, gays, and Gypsies. The ancient Greeks, on the other hand, considered intolerance of homosexuals a barbarian characteristic (Plato, *Symposium* 182 D). The Roman Catholic position on homosexuality has varied greatly over time (which suggests to me that it might be based on something other than purely religious considerations). Scriptural references to homosexuality are fraught with mis-translation and misinterpretation. And the same texts which condemn homosexuality condemn hypocrisy and exclude the greedy from heaven, yet for some reason hypocrites were not burned at the stake and the greedy are not persecuted; the scriptures are adhered to selectively. If we take, on the other hand, the tradition of the church fathers, there was indeed a vocal minority which censured homosexual acts, but these same church fathers condemned absolutely "lending at interest, sexual intercourse during the menstrual period, jewelry or dyed fabrics, shaving, regular bathing, wearing wigs, serving in the civil government or army, performing manual labor on feast days, eating kosher food, practicing circumcision" (John Boswell, *Christianity, Social*

*Tolerance and Homosexuality*, 166). Let him who is without sin...

On the side of tolerance, in the high middle ages an openly gay archbishop could appoint his lover bishop, and monks could write homoerotic religious poetry apparently without fear of censure. Richard Lion Heart, the crusading king and symbol of chivalric idealism, was both Catholic and gay. Only later, when Jews and heretics were also being burned at the stake, did it become dangerous to be gay.

In the Soviet Union dissi-

dents were diagnosed as insane and subjected to treatment in mental institutions. Now, the same dissidents are received as prophets of democracy. Such abuses are worth remembering, though no one now will defend them on scientific grounds. Likewise the classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder should be a subject for discussion. Surely no one with a degree in psychology would defend such a position. It is a "major question," as Mr. Upham points out, though not in psychology, but in the history of psychology. The question we

should be asking is not whether or not homosexuality is a mental disorder, but what might lie behind the desire to classify it as such.

I hope this letter contributes to the free exchange of ideas and to the continuing process of education. In many cases a negative opinion of homosexuality can be stripped by such a process of its ostensible justification to reveal what lies behind it: naked hatred and intolerance of difference. The opinions and ideas we can discuss. It is the hatred and intolerance that have no place at Middlebury.

## Quoth the Raven...

by Bruce Bender

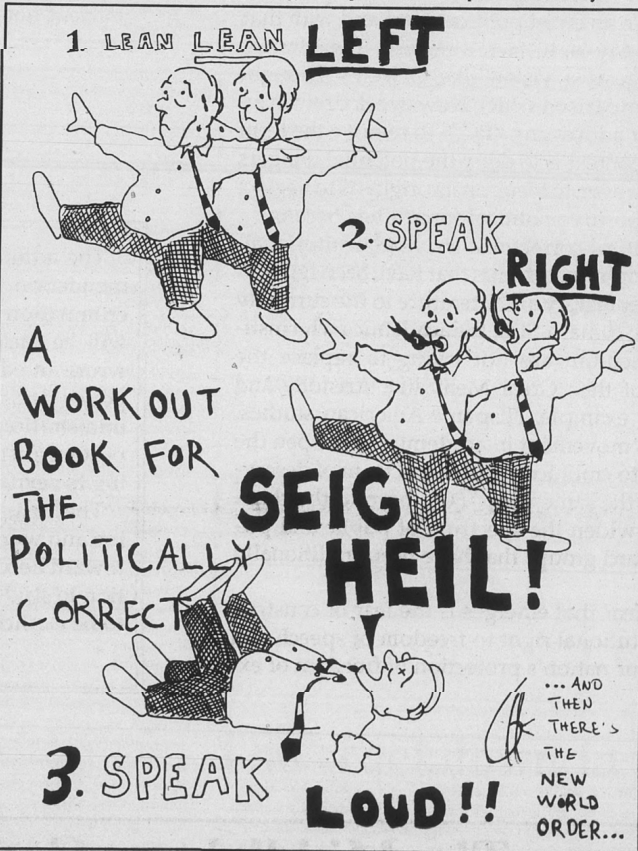
In his talk Sunday evening, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. paralleled the Kurdish and Shiite rebellions in Iraq to the Prague Spring of 1968. In each case the US implied assistance would be forthcoming to rebellious movements, in each case rebellion began, and in each case the US left the rebels to be crushed by the ruling Czechoslovakians or Iraqis.

This is terribly irresponsible behaviour, as evidenced by the hundreds of thousands of Kurds currently dying in the Zagros Mountains. In fact, the entire post-war handling of Iraq has been a shining example of the ignorance and shortsightedness the US has always had in its Middle East foreign policies. It is evident that George Bush and James Baker decided against a fragmentation of Iraq, instead preferring the maintenance of its international borders under some ruler other than Saddam Hussein. Unfortunately, this leaves the Kurds hung out to dry. Neighboring nations will neither accept them nor wish to see them gain independence. Turkey, Iran, Syria and the Soviet Union all have restless Kurds who were promised an independent state back in 1920, and all these nations have a decided self-interest in seeing the Kurdish problem somehow disappear, which it is now doing in the Zagros mountains.

The New York Times quoted an Arab spokesman as saying "Syria would prefer a Baathist government without Saddam Hussein. Not a democratic one, not a Kurdish one, not a Shiite one, and not a pro-western one." In other words, Syria, ruled by Baath Socialists, wants to see Iraq stabilized as politically identical to Syria as possible, and the Kurds are in the way.

The Turks are certainly never going to allow the Iraqi Kurds to cross their border, for they would only add to the ethnic unrest already widespread across Eastern Turkey. Turkey has a long history of brutally suppressing its Kurdish population and is already being accused of intentionally blocking independent relief efforts for the refugees in Iraq. This leaves the Kurds in a hopeless position, stalled in the mountains while an Iraqi government loaded to the gills with nerve gas regroup behind them.

The American forces are pulling out now, having bombed Iraq into the economic stone age. Efforts are being made to establish a small United Nations peacekeeping force on the Kuwait-Iraq border, but this will not help the Kurds in the slightest. In the next few months and years the world will witness a horrid tragedy reminiscent of the Armenian holocaust as Kurdish corpses litter the picturesque valleys of the Zagros mountains.



## What should be the New World Order?

by Jean Richardot

*Editor's Note: This is the continuation of the author's two part series.*

The present climate in international relations is more attuned to meet the aforementioned security challenges than ever before. But strangely, it is in meeting long-term economic and social objectives that the UN faces the greatest obstacles on the road to any New World Order. Success has not yet been achieved in satisfactorily integrating the world economy and improving living conditions in the Third World. Currently, 70 percent of the world's population enjoys only 30 percent of world income. A more vigorous attack on ignorance, hunger, overpopulation, and diseases in the Third World is needed to avoid new conflicts and wars.

The industrialized countries rejected the "New International Economic Order" proposed at the UN by the "Group of 77" (actually a group of 125 non-aligned member states of the UN) which in 1974 proclaimed their determination to work for the urgent establishment of a new order based on equity, common interest and cooperation among the states, to enable

elimination of the widening gap between developed and developing countries and ensure steadily accelerating economic development in peace and justice for present and future generations, including domestic reforms in the developing countries themselves.

This declaration, presented in the form of a manifesto, displeased the industrialized countries. It did, however, contain several valid claims, such as for providing greater technical assistance for developing countries, renegotiating their debts and improving trade terms and conditions. The "New International Economic Order" is now dead, yet in some new form the problems noted therein will have to be re-examined, if not globally, at least regionally and locally.

Times are changing. A few years ago the United States, because of free-enterprise lobbying at home, did not approve a UN International Authority concerning development of seabed resources for the benefit of humanity. It also stood virtually alone in the world in rejecting as a package the new UN Law of the Sea agreement. Such positions must be reconsidered.

In more recent instances the US has joined UN efforts to avert global disaster from depletion of the ozone layer, as in its signing of the Montreal Protocol for curbing chlorofluorocarbon emissions. Addressing such world economic, social and ecological problems much more thoroughly than in the past becomes an imperative of the New World Order.

No doubt bilateral aid and technical assistance to the Third World will remain the most important approach for some years. But the UN should—and can—do much more to improve economic, social and humanitarian conditions. Only 15 percent of world aid and technical assistance resources now go through the UN system. The world has become so interdependent that most problems affecting the planet are global in nature and call for multilateral action. To deal with environmental protection, population explosion, refugees and international trade and debt settlement, terrorism, drugs and

AIDS, no state can evolve a solution alone, if a true New World Order is the goal. UN World Conferences on several of these critical problems have already outlined the policies to follow at the local, national and international levels, and several action programs have been started.

The UN Stockholm Conference on the Environment in 1972 was the first to recognize the deterioration of our environment as a global problem. The UN Conference on Environment and Development, to take place next year in Brazil and already in full

preparation, is expected to draw up agreements on basic principles to guide international behavior cooperation in respect of the environment and development. It will also set an agenda for action into the 21st century and consider the strengthening of relevant and realizable institutional mechanisms and processes.

The US must be resolute in taking the lead in the UN, together with its partners, in addressing these problems. Many UN action programs have proved excellent at the interna-

(continued on page 23)

## Correcting Upham

by Matthew Reed

In the Opinions section of the latest Campus, David Upham mentioned what he feels is "a major question within psychology: whether homosexual orientation constitutes a mental disorder."

It should be pointed out, however, that in 1972 the idea that homosexuality is a mental dis-

order was explicitly repudiated by the Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association and its general membership, as well as by the American Psychological Association. Consequently, in 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its official list of psychiatric disorders.