

editorial opinion

Selling causes, not unity

Jobs, peace and freedom. And nuclear disarmament, gay rights, the environment, and President Reagan's foreign and domestic policy. And almost as if an afterthought, the commemoration of the 1963 Civil Rights march galvanized by Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech.

Causes, causes, and more causes were the order of the day on Saturday when more than 200,000 people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington to march in peaceful protest. If you had a cause, you had an audience to listen and enough press to cover it.

If there was anything uniting those who attended, it was the participants' anti-Reagan sentiment. The march sent a warning to the Reagan Administration that America's liberals are not satisfied with the way Reagan is running the country.

But this is nothing new. The liberals in American politics have been anti-Reagan since he hopped on the backs of the Moral Majority to further his first presidential campaign. The left wasn't able to galvanize its opposition then and despite the strong outpouring of anti-Reagan sentiment expressed at the march, there is little real evidence that they will be able to do it in 1984.

Sure, all the major speakers at the march were anti-Reagan. They all preached unity in their fight for more jobs, human rights, and nuclear disarmament.

But there the unity stopped. Each of the speakers went off on their own agenda, parading their causes and giving their own reasons why Reagan should no longer be president.

For that reason Reagan has a good chance of winning in 1984. The Democratic Party is already badly divided. For the speakers representing minority groups opposed to Reagan to trumpet their own causes does little but demonstrate how divided the party can be.

To be sure, a Democratic president was elected the year after the 1963 march. But that march was much more focused than its 1983 version. People were angrier then. In the 1983 version, the marchers in Washington were primarily products of the "me generation" of the '70s. Although it is no longer "in" to be concerned only about one's self, some people have apparently decided to go halfway and be concerned only about those like themselves.

Speakers at the march used this opportunity to sell their causes in much the same way as souvenir vendors used the event to sell everything from commemorative T-shirts to Martin Luther King paper fans.

The march should have been organized to honor a great man and his dream for America. The parade of individual concerns was a disservice to the memory of a man who preached unity. And it did little to encourage the unity he preached.



THE COMMITTEE TO REELECT THE PRESIDENT

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Make suggestions. Make a difference.

G O P women unhappy with 'ERA Alternative'

Finally, it is becoming apparent to women. Whether Republican or Democrat, women are seeing the results of the Reagan Administration's policy on ending sex discrimination — or rather, seeing the lack of results. President Reagan's intentions are not necessarily at fault — although they could be. For the most part, Reagan talks as if he supports women's equality.

The problem is that he has not done anything to further women's rights.

For a long time, most of those women who attacked Reagan's efforts were Democrats. For example, the National Organization of Women, a predominantly Democratic group, has consistently brought attention to the discrepancy between Reagan's words and his actions.

The dismissal of support for the Equal Rights Amendment from the 1980 Republican presidential

platform did cause some Republican women to defect. However, most top women in the G O P organization remained with Reagan and the party to seek Reagan's "ERA Alternative." Until recently that is.

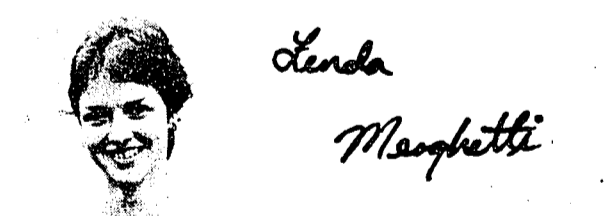
The most visible example of this resurging disenchantment with Reagan's stands on women's issues is Barbara Honneger. A project director for the Attorney General's Gender Discrimination agency review, Honneger resigned last week after criticizing Reagan's lack of action in The Washington Post.

In a column, Honneger outlined Reagan's stated intentions and his lack of action. "To date, three Quarterly Reports of the Attorney General have gone forward to the president . . . but a single law has been changed," she wrote.

Honneger accused Reagan of reneging "on his com-

mitment." Her criticism and resignation resulted in a lot of media coverage and renewed speculation about the power of the gender gap against Reagan if he decides to seek reelection.

Indeed, this gender gap may be a potent force as Reagan may boast about his record for curtailing sex discrimination. But Betty Heitman, co-chairman of the Republican Party, disagrees. "I think we have done a poor job," she said about the G O P's efforts to end sex discrimination.



Linda Menghetti

Some defenders of the administration point out that Reagan appointed three women to top-level cabinet positions and the first woman to the Supreme Court. Yet, Republican Muriel Siebert, the first woman member of the New York Stock Exchange and a former New York state superintendent of banks, called these appointments meaningless.

In a speech before the New York Republican leadership, Siebert said, "The women who represent the Republican Party at the highest levels of public life — in the Supreme Court, in the Cabinet and in Congress — have as much to do with the leadership of the party as a mannequin has to do with the management of Bloomingdale's."

With all this criticism from within his own party, it would seem natural that Reagan would do everything possible to curb it and to woo women back to the G.O.P.

So far it seems he has only blundered. For example, in a speech before the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, Reagan quipped, "I happen to be one who believes that if it wasn't for women, us men would still be walking around in skin suits carrying clubs."

This remark provoked a number of responses from a cartoon in the Los Angeles Times depicting Reagan as the caveman to a remark by Polly Madenwald, presi-

dent of the United States' chapter of the federation, that the comment was "degrading, inappropriate and I was offended."

Later in the speech, Reagan said he would "do penance" for his mistakes with women by going over a new study on discriminatory laws. It is interesting that one who claims to be such an advocate of women's rights finds doing something about the situation such a chore.

Considering Reagan's attempts to mollify women, it is no wonder that his administration's actions are harmful to women. The Department of Labor recently announced that it would require only voluntary efforts to promote hiring of women by businesses. This announcement marks a leap backwards from affirmative action, which required legal action upon the discovery of discrimination.

And, of course, Reagan's lack of support for the Equal Rights Amendment is another departure from his good intentions. Honneger argued that his "ERA Alternative" is just "a sham."

Morover, Honneger said that the Reagan Administration is proof that nothing less than the ERA will improve women's positions in this country because "federal statutes can be repealed or, if technically still on the books, be effectively voided by a president who doesn't enforce or who narrows the scope of the law." Without the constitutional protection of the amendment, women will be subject to the whims of a particular president.

At the moment Reagan is our president, and perhaps because of the upsurge in criticism he will change his actions concerning the rights of women.

In his latest speech on the 33rd anniversary of women's suffrage, Reagan told the Republican Women's Leadership Forum that he ordered the Department of Justice to "accelerate" its efforts concerning statutory sex discrimination. Like many of Reagan's other intentions regarding women, however, his words appear to have accomplished little.

If positive action does not occur, perhaps the outrage that many women now feel will be translated into a strong voting block in the 1984 presidential election, supporting candidates who will work toward ending sex discrimination in our society.

Linda Menghetti is a junior majoring in political science and a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Her column appears on alternate Tuesdays.

reader opinion

Without distinction

This fall, those of us who are returning to campus are making many adjustments. But some of us are confronted with a rather unfortunate situation — the conversion from a standard to a variable determination of graduation with distinction.

While it is true that in the past inequities among colleges have made it next to impossible for many brilliant engineering students to graduate with a 3.4, 3.6 or 3.8, it seems that the new distinction ranges are poorly conceived, especially because they are not determined until immediately before commencement.

I have a personal stake in this situation. I am an undergraduate student in administration of justice. But since the end of my sophomore year, I have

also been a graduate student in community systems planning and development (thanks to the Integrated Undergraduate Graduate Program of the University Scholars Program).

After a lackluster freshman year following my discharge from the Army, I managed to bring my grade point average into the old high distinction range and within reach of the highest distinction range. Now it appears that neither my college nor the University Registrar can give me more than vague guidelines to "shoot for." One needs to have a GPA within the top 12 percent of one's college to graduate with simple distinction, the top six percent to graduate with high distinction and the top two percent to achieve highest distinction.

The university average GPA for the top 10 percent in the senior class is 3.72 to 4.0, and for the

second ten percent it is from 3.55 to 3.71. This means that many students who would have qualified with high distinction will graduate without distinction, and many within the old high distinction range will graduate with simple distinction. Not much recognition for a hard-earned 3.8 plus.

It would make much more sense to allow the colleges to establish fixed distinction ranges, rather than averages, based on their educated perceptions of what should be required. This way the University may be fair to the engineers as well as to everyone else.

Thomas R. Dahlberg, undergraduate/graduate administration of justice and community systems planning and development
Aug. 29

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