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THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
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TO THE EDITOR

Protestors Deny Rights

To the Editor:

After observing the protest against the C.I.A. outside the Career Counseling and Placement offices and reading the protest committee's letter in *The Campus* on Friday, Feb. 18, I was struck by the irony of the event.

How can the peace-loving, freedom fighting members of the "Committee Concerned About Intelligence Recruiting," in all good conscience, possibly ruin the chances of others to be hired or even recruited in future

years by the Central Intelligence Agency? For certain students, particularly language majors, the C.I.A. represents an important and realistic career opportunity to be explored.

It is extremely unfortunate that in trying to protect personal rights, the protest committee may have succeeded in completely denying the rights of those students interested in pursuing a career in the C.I.A.

Karen Cleary

Atmosphere Is Too Stifling

To the Editor:

I begin this article out of a concern for education. There have been many articles recently published in *The Campus* in relation to this subject. The topic which I wish to broach is open-mindedness. What I mean by this term is the willingness to think or discuss anything without fear of hostile response.

College is a time for experimentation, a time of discovery. A liberal arts education is intended to expose us to new avenues of life. Certainly, critical reaction to what we say or do is a desired consequence, though at times painful. Reaction should help give perspective to our thinking, not shape it entirely; but often, this is what happens.

Idealism gives perspective but should not be the norm. It is, by definition, untenable. It is a guideline, not a life goal. Realism, on the other hand, should be the norm. It is tenable, but cannot exist by itself. We need ideals in order to give shape to the perspective.

The neo-conservatism which pervades this campus is unhealthy to the open mind. It is an ideal. It cannot give shape to realism if it is overwhelming. It achieves this only in moderation; but at Middlebury moderation is not the case. Instead, it suffocates and stifles.

Last Friday there was a peaceful demonstration concerning C.I.A. involvement on this campus. During the course of this protest there were several offended people who made jeers concerning the liberal quality of the demonstrators. Albeit, this was a reaction, yet not the kind of which I am writing. Probably, all of us have heard from one source or another that criticism should be constructive. This is true, however, these comments were not examples of this ideology. They represented a hostile reaction stating an adamant position. This is not constructive criticism. How many of us have knowledge of the C.I.A.'s involvement on college campuses? Yet, by listening, we can find out

more. Although it is only one viewpoint on the issue, we all can provide viewpoints derived from our acquired orientations.

This incident is only one example. An advertisement for *The New York Times* stated that "an open mind prospers in an environment of tranquility." When we react to something which questions our beliefs, we should react critically, not hostilely. Not only will we support more intellectual exploration, but also we will learn more; and, after all, isn't that why we are here — to learn?

David Thornbury