

Editorial

'Where there is no vision, the people perish'

The death of Admiral Hyman Rickover, just after the Fourth of July festivities, gives us an appropriate occasion to celebrate the qualities which justly made this nation great. The colossal banality of the New York City ceremonies, in which the traitor Henry Kissinger was honored with a medal and the patriot Admiral Rickover forgotten, only emphasizes the need to remember why this nation has been great.

Hyman Rickover was born in Russia in 1900, of Jewish parents. He came to America when he was six years old, and he was educated in the public schools of New York City and Chicago, and then secured an appointment to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. He qualified as an electrical engineer, and served as a submarine commander in the 1930s.

Following World War II, it was Rickover who developed the first nuclear reactor, which would be used to propel a submarine.

These days, when it takes as much as 15 years to build a nuclear plant (due, of course, to the sabotage of the anti-nuclear lobby), it is hard to believe that Rickover built the first nuclear reactor in less than four years—and under far more stringent, real safety conditions, since it would be housed in a submarine. The contract was signed on July 15, 1949 and, by the end of May 1953, the Mark I reactor was finished. By June 15 of that year, full power was successfully reached.

Rickover's vision of a future in which nuclear fission was the transition to the cheap, unlimited resource of fusion power transforming the world, was put forward in his book *Education and Freedom*, in 1959:

"Whenever man makes a major advance in his age old effort to utilize the forces of nature, he must simultaneously raise his education, his techniques, and his institutions to a higher plateau.

"From the splitting of the atom in the 1930s to the bomb of the 1940s, to the practical nuclear power plant of 1953, a vast amount of intellectual effort of a high order had to be expended. Highly trained nuclear engineers are needed to design, build, and run nuclear power plants. Still greater demands on the human mind will be made if and when we obtain energy from hydrogen fusion.

"It is obvious that the kind of American who thoroughly mastered his environment on the frontier in the muscle, wind, and water state of technology would be totally ineffective in the atomic age which is just around the corner, and the fusion age which is still a way off."

Rickover was a different breed of man from Henry Kissinger, as shown by this brief selection from his comments on Robert McNamara and his method:

"At one time Pagan gods ruled the world. . . . Now it is the cost accountants. The cost effectiveness studies have become a religion. . . . They are fog bombs. . . . Frankly, I have no more faith in the ability of social scientists to quantify military effectiveness than I do in numerologists to calculate the future. . . .

"On a cost-effectiveness basis the colonists would not have revolted against King George III, nor would John Paul Jones have engaged the *Serapis* with the *Bonhomme Richard*, an inferior ship. The Greeks at Thermopylae and Salamis would not have stood up to the Persians had they had cost effectiveness people to advise them. . . . Computer logic would have advised the British to make terms with Hitler in 1940, a course that would have been disastrous."

Rickover's spirit is exemplified by the Biblical motto from Proverbs that always hung on his office wall: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." We honor Admiral Hyman Rickover. His was a good life.