

Demonstration misdirected

Wednesday night, frustration over the slow-moving gears of the state government erupted in a 1960s style occupation of Johnson Hall's office of the Chancellor of Higher Education. The occupation, sparked by the dogmatic rhetoric of some of the supporters of the divestment of State Board stocks in companies doing business in South Africa and fueled by Vice-Chancellor Freeman Holmer's true but unconvincing reasons for the delay in the sale, resulted in the arrest of 19 people inside the building and four more supporters outside.

The demonstrators, in spite of the fact that their demonstration was misdirected and accomplished nothing, reiterated some excellent points. One was that the Oregon Investment Council (OIC) has questioned the authority of the State Board to sell the controversial stocks, but the OIC has not had that authority in the past. The OIC has merely rubber-stamped and managed the Board's investments. The selling of stock for political reasons has never occurred before, and the OIC relations with the State Board are in question as much as the sale of the stocks.

Holmer's attempt to explain to the demonstrators why the divestment has been held up in the Attorney General's office, where a legal opinion on the issue is pending, sounded like a Catch-22 whirlpool of muddled rules and convinced the demonstrators not only that the state government is ducking the issue, but that the system of government is so unresponsive and incapable of making a decision — even after its own agency has voted to make a decision — that it is ignoring both the apartheid system abroad and the people here.

The demonstrators' impatience, however, accomplished nothing other than to get the issue into print and onto broadcast waves: it was a media event. The demands were impossible to meet. The first, that the State Board sell the stock immediately, can't be done until the Attorney General makes a decision. The second, "amended," demand — asking that the issue be placed on the agenda of the State Board for its meeting today in Monmouth — was fruitless because the

State Board can do nothing more than what it has already done. The issue is now out of the Board's hands.

The demonstrators seemed to assume that the Attorney General would rule against the stock-sale — an assumption that is not certain and whose likelihood is impossible to predict. The demonstrators seemed dissatisfied that the Attorney General's decision — if negative — could be taken to court, where both sides would be able to debate the issue.

All of that, because it is the governmental procedure, would take time. The wheels of government do indeed turn slowly. But the demonstrators, dissatisfied with the molasses movement on the issue, were misdirected because the State Board can neither sell the stocks nor take any further action — at least not until the Attorney General's opinion is revealed. The demand that the State Board "dump" the stock "now" was unreasonable because the issue is now in the judicial process. Of course the State Board should follow through with its decision, but it is powerless until the opinion is made.

The demonstrators' demands were misdirected, but the police and the campus detectives handling the situation were reactionary and excessive. Though the police acted systematically, taking demonstrators one at a time from the chancellor's office like apples from a barrel, it was an aggravating influence to call in 15 officers equipped with riot gear to deal with the demonstrators. By resorting to the police tactics of the 1960s, the police gave even more credence to the demonstrators' belief that they were facing a "fascist regime."

Also, the police, who had been heckled by some demonstrators while removing the office-occupiers from the building, were gruff in handling four demonstrators outside. The arrests were selective, for there were nearly 50 demonstrators outside the building.

All in all, it was a drama designed for the theatre of the absurd. The demands were unreasonable and misdirected, the explanations were unconvincing and the reaction by the police was overplayed. We hope that this production of a time gone by doesn't damage the cause of selling the State Board's stocks.

Formula misused

Submitted by
Timothy Shorrock for the
Clergy and Laity Concerned

A response to the Nestle rebuttal to infant formula critics, reported in the Emerald on December 12, and a follow-up on recent events concerning the Nestle boycott.

Steve Korsen, Nestle consumer affairs manager, made four main points in his Emerald interview; similar statements are made to those who write to Nestle about infant formula abuse. 1) Protestors do not consider what would happen if the product was not available; 2) the corporation has modified its practices; 3) American workers' jobs are being threatened; and 4) Nestle communications with protest groups have been ignored. I will address these points.

First, Nestle statements that "there is an absolute need for a supplementary product for mothers who cannot breast-feed" is misleading and ignores the basic issue of the boycott. Although Nestle claims that 80 percent of mothers in developing countries need supplementary feeding, many studies show a far smaller figure; some doctors claim that only 5 percent of mothers need formula feeding. But the issue Nestle refuses to recognize is that their advertising and "education" makes poor women in developing countries believe that the "modern," "western," and therefore, "healthy" method is supplementary feeding. In the words of a Swiss judge:

What is decisive here is at whom this multiple advertising is directed. In developing countries, the person reached is a mother or an expectant mother domiciled mostly in urban slums who is unable to differentiate and who is susceptible to advertising slogans.

Should Nestle serve as an intermediary between these women and nutrition? Can Nestle, the second largest food multinational corporation, provide objective information about breast feeding and infant formula when their goal is to sell their product? Nestle says yes; we say no.

The choice, however, is often made for these mothers in hospitals heavily subsidized by Nestle. This is what is meant by "modification" of its practices. In the last year, under pressure for its advertising and marketing techniques, Nestle has changed from direct advertising to direct subsidizing. Thus, radio jingles may no longer play on the air and nurses may no longer sell infant formula; instead, hospitals themselves dole out the product. A month's free supply of formula guarantees a customer for at least a year — at prices usually two or three times the price in Europe. According to a Brazilian trade magazine "Modern Supermarket," infant formula profits margins in that country are 71 percent.

Thirdly, Korsen brings up the issue of American jobs. Presumably, if enough people boycotted Nestle products, workers would lose their jobs. In that case, who would be to blame? Thousands of people do not consciously change their eating and buying habits unless they have carefully considered an issue. Does this mean we should place priority on jobs instead of lives?

Finally, the charge that activists have refused to meet with Nestle is false. In December, several meetings were held in the East Coast between boycott organizers and Nestle representatives from both Switzerland and the United States. Boycott groups welcome these interchanges with Nestle because they represent the power of the Boycott and provide interesting glimpses into how Nestle views the problem of malnutrition and hunger in the developing world. When Nestle representatives met with a Clergy and Laity Concerned group in Atlanta, Georgia recently, the following exchange took place: Nestle: You see, we're doing these people a favor in providing them with infant formula because the mothers are undernourished and so can't provide enough of their own milk.

CALC: Why are the women so malnourished?

Nestle: The farming patterns have changed. Where people used to raise their own food on subsistence farms, they're now raising cash crops, and so they don't have the same easy access to food.

CALC: What are they raising instead of food?

Nestle: Cocoa.

The boycotters couldn't have said it better.

Letters

Review off target

David Coursen reviews (Emerald, Jan. 26) "A Special Day" as a film which is "flat and mechanical" not to mention "boring." His description might have been more aptly applied to himself. It is somewhat distressing to

me that someone who calls himself a film critic could be so far off the mark in his assessment of this brilliant film.

Coursen implies that what is primarily wrong with "A Special Day" is that it is set during Mussolini's rise to power in fascist Italy. But this is so fundamentally

essential to the plot that I have trouble believing that Coursen watched the film beyond the credits. Sophia Loren is an Italian housewife who reveres Mussolini as a God. As the film develops Loren first rejects Mastroianni's gay, subversive figure just as any "good" Italian should in fas-

cist Italy.

Slowly though, she becomes more and more sensitive to Mastroianni and finally, goes against her most deeply held beliefs becoming romantically involved with him for a moment. An Italian housewife of fascist Italy, whose love for Mussolini is as great as any Italian's, has been confronted by a reality other than Mussolini's, one in fact forbidden by Mussolini and for a moment by the end of the film, has some doubts about the dogma of this God/Leader and his regime.

Mussolini says that in order to be a man one must be a husband, a father and a soldier. Mastroianni is none of these and yet Loren finds that she is inexplicably drawn towards him despite his lack of and, in fact, antithesis of these "qualities." Her whole world is shaken, at least temporarily, on this special day.

Ettore Scola's direction is sensitive and subtle (evidently too subtle for Coursen) and the photography is beautiful. I judge this film as one of the year's best and certainly the best currently

showing in Eugene. If David Coursen was bored by "A Special Day," then perhaps he should limit his viewing to Starsky and Hutch or Kojak as they are much faster paced and would not challenge his mind so much.

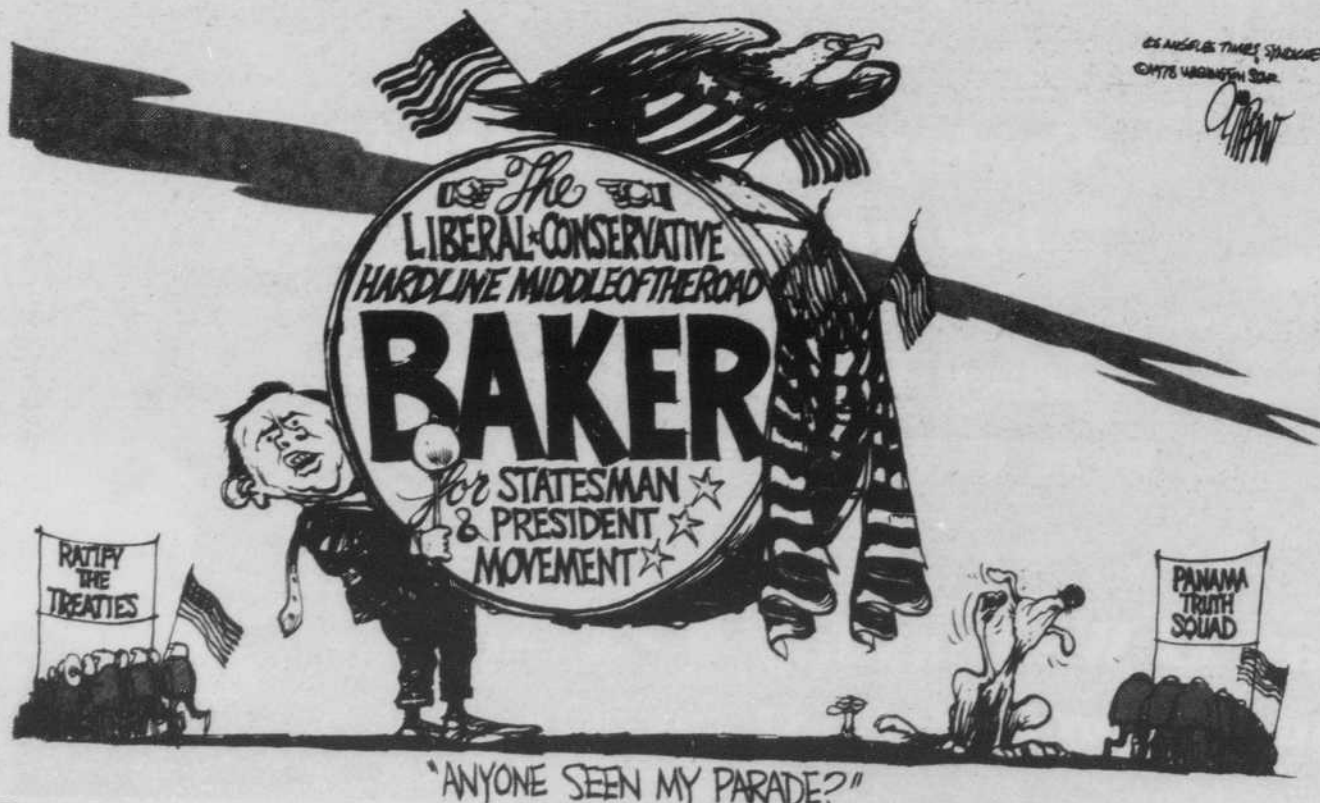
Bruce Robinson
Freshman, Undeclared

Hines departs

I noticed Peter Holden's letter of Jan. 24 challenging Terry Hines to "come out" and debate and since Terry is not likely to see this letter, I thought I would answer for him, as his friend. Terry finished the work for his Ph.D. in Psychology in December and has moved to Boston, where he is doing research with brain-damaged adults. Those of us who are Terry's friends can only be amused, however, at the suggestion that he would ever hide from a debate!

Daniel Kimble
Professor of Psychology

Friday, January 27, 1978



"ANYONE SEEN MY PARADE?"