

opinion

Housing committee acting suspiciously

There's something — or perhaps someone — rotten in the EMU Board's Housing Committee.

The committee's recent activity regarding Student Projects Inc., (Footnotes), is a "smokescreen" to disguise an attack on OSPIRG. If we may mix our metaphors, the "smokescreen" smells a little rotten.

The "smokescreen" is wholly transparent. Dan Cohen, a Board member, and Marc Spence, an incidental fee committee member, seem to be acting according to their own political views.

Cohen, Spence and other members of the committee appear to be acting capriciously, in a prejudicial manner and using their positions to help friends.

The question of Footnotes paying rent came up during a Board meeting at which the question of OSPIRG paying rent was originally broached.

Footnotes, as with a number of other groups located in the EMU, came up as part of the discussion.

There are some curious elements regarding the procedure used to put the OSPIRG rental question on the Housing Committee's agenda.

First, Cohen put the item on the agenda without prior notice or discussion. Many of the committee members were surprised the OSPIRG rental question came up. They were unprepared to even discuss the matter.

However, a couple of committee members were a little too ready to address the OSPIRG rental question, and a little too eager to assign rent to the research group.

Other committee members have characterized these committee members' actions as "ram-rodding."

A last minute request to postpone the question prevented any hasty action.

The feeling among many people in the committee, and the ASUO, is the OSPIRG rental question was a direct result of the Constitutional Court's recent case against the research group.

In fact, it's another avenue of attack by almost the same people. Some members of the committee are merely working in the interests of the PIRG-busters.

Cohen admitted two University students asked him to determine OSPIRG's rental status. Apparently, bad news travels in pairs.

There are three criteria for space being provided in the EMU. A group must be either a registered or recognized program under the auspices of the ASUO, the EMU, or be a retailer. SEARCH, or ESCAPE are examples of ASUO programs — programs that aren't, under present guidelines, required to pay rent. Anderson's, Baskin Robbins and Sooter's are examples of retailers who pay full rent.

The committee does need to define a more conclusive rental policy for groups using EMU space, but the policy should be written before groups are charged rent or evicted.

OSPIRG and Footnotes should not pay rent because they are ASUO programs. Also, OSPIRG is almost exclusively staffed by student volunteers.

Footnotes was an ASUO program until a reorganization in 1974. Their status hasn't been updated. Which means they haven't cemented or severed ties with the ASUO.

As for the charge that some committee members appear to be working in the interests of their friends, rather than in the interests of the EMU Board, one has only to examine the committee's actions regarding the *Oregon Commentator*.

Committee members say Cohen acted suspiciously in the handling of the *Commentator's* request for office space in the EMU.

The *Commentator* became a recognized group on a Monday and were on the Housing Committee's agenda by Wednesday of that week. Cohen personally put the item on the agenda.

There are 200 recognized or registered groups on campus, only 40 of which are granted space in the EMU. Many of the groups have been waiting to meet with the committee since spring. Why has the *Commentator* had better luck with the committee?

The committee's actions become even more suspicious regarding the timing of the *Commentator's* status as a recognized or registered group. Cohen claims he was informed of the *Commentator* verbally by its editor as early as August.

The EMU Board policy states a group must "apply" to be a recognized or registered group. The word is "apply." It appears a casual conversation with a committee member is sufficient application in this instance.

With this latest attack on OSPIRG (and Footnotes) the committee has become a political weapon wielded by specific committee members to achieve their own personal political goals and the goals of their group.

The EMU rent question is an obvious attack on OSPIRG by the same group that took them before the Constitutional Court. What is deplorable is that now members of an important committee are doing the PIRG-busters' bidding.

But more deplorable than this politicking, certain committee members are abusing their positions to bolster the fortunes of their friends.



Grenada: seven points to ponder

Seven administration myths about the war in Grenada: Although the war is only two weeks old, the credibility gap is already wide open.

1) Pres. Ronald Reagan claimed that he started planning an invasion only after receiving a request from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) on Oct. 22. However, Prime Minister Tom Adams of Barbados admitted that the U.S. approached Barbados on Oct. 15 and proposed an invasion. It was therefore a U.S. initiative; the OECS countries just went along as window-dressing.

comments john farley

2) Reagan claimed that the invasion was necessary to evacuate the American medical students. In fact, four planes left Grenada the day before the invasion. Thus, the evacuation had already begun before the invasion started. Reagan, eager for an excuse, hurried to attack before the evacuation effort succeeded.

3) Reagan claimed that the longer runway that Grenada was building with the help of Cuban laborers was for military use, because Grenada doesn't have an air force. Grenada said it was for tourism. *Nation* magazine (April 13) revealed the length of the new airport runway at Grenada was comparable to that of other countries of similar size and population. Aruba and St. Lucia have runways about the same size as Grenada's; and Antigua, Barbados, and Curacao have significantly longer runways. None of these other countries has an air force, either.

The excavation for the airport was being done by the Layne Dredge Company of Florida, and the European Economic Community had contributed \$16 million towards construction of the airport. A British firm, Plessey Aripports, was supplying the radar equipment. The *Sunday Express* (London) reported that the mood in official British circles was one of "furious incredulity" over the Reagan administration's claims that the airport "was all part of a Communist plot."

4) Phantom missile bunkers and a planted story: On Oct. 28, a UPI dispatch from the *Detriot Free Press*, quoting a "Pentagon official," reported that two weeks before the invasion, an American spy on Grenada had seen and photographed a Soviet missile bunker only 800 feet from the Point Salines airport. Reporters covering the airport area haven't found them. If the missile bunkers really existed, why weren't they shown to the reporters? The only logical answer is that the bunkers never existed.

5) Reagan claimed that he was restoring democracy to Grenada. While real power rests in the

hands of Reagan and the Pentagon, the front man is Sir Paul Scoon, the British-appointed Governor-general. Reagan has restored colonialism, not democracy.

6) Reagan claimed that Cuba was behind the coup against Maurice Bishop. This claim makes no sense at all, because Bishop was a very strong ally of Cuba. It was very much in the interest of Cuba to see Maurice Bishop alive and in office.

7) Government censorship: Reagan deliberately barred reporters from Grenada in order to make the "official" version of events the only version available. The official excuse for censorship is protection of the lives of reporters. Yet, reporters covered both World Wars and the Korean and Vietnam wars at their own risk. Obviously, this is not Reagan's real reason for censorship. The real reason is that the public will not support the invasion if the reporters are present. The "official" film released in the first week did not show any dead or wounded people. Evidently, Reagan is trying to minimize public awareness of the human cost of his policy. Support for aggression is easier to mobilize in the absence of unpleasant facts and unpleasant questions.

This is just a partial list of the internal contradictions in the Reagan administration's cover story as it shifts and squirms. The almost daily changes of the administration's cover story is evidence that no single cover story is defensible. Reagan is presenting a moving target.

So much for Reagan's lies. Now the hard truth: The real purpose of the invasion is that Reagan wants to fight a short, successful war in order to whip up a militaristic fervor and improve his reelection chances. A brief, successful war in the Falklands got Maggie Thatcher reelected in Britain, despite the colossal failure of her economic policy (the unemployment rate more than doubled during her first term). Reagan wants a short war in order to win before an anti-war movement has time to develop. This strategy requires the U.S., the most powerful country on earth, to attack a small, weak, virtually defenseless country. Grenada, the smallest nation in the Western Hemisphere, has no air force and no navy. It is not a fair fight. It is like a 260 pound football player beating up a toddler. It is a dirty, disgusting, disgraceful little war.

Of course, there are those who root for the football player. Reagan hopes to overcome the war-weariness of the American public (the "Vietnam syndrome"); he hopes that a militaristic attitude of swaggering and bullying becomes the national mood. If Reagan's war of aggression against Grenada succeeds politically, the next logical step will be an invasion of Nicaragua. And after that? Cuba?

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