

Minorities and the law addressed at program

By Michael Fisher
Of the Emerald

Dedicating the day's events to the memory of Martin Luther King Sr. and Martin Luther King Jr., the University chapter of the Minority Law Students Association presented its Minorities and the Law symposium Saturday, at the University law school.

The program, centered upon the theme "Their Struggle is Now Ours," featured a keynote address by law school dean Derrick Bell and a number of discussions on the major legal issues concerning minorities of this decade.

Peggy Nagae, assistant law school dean, opened the symposium with a critique of the current state of civil rights in this area. "In places like Oregon, and in particular Eugene, (non-whites) are in a distinct minority here, but not (made to feel) at home," she said. "The forms of racism may have changed, but much of the substance remains."

Martin Luther King Jr., said Nagae, "looked beyond the way things were. He had a vision of what could be." She urged the audience of about 50 lawyers, law students and other interested people to "not limit ourselves to what others have chosen, but go deeper and higher" in the pursuit of racial equality.

The first of four seminars dealt with the immigration laws of the United States and current legislative proposals that are "aimed at persons of color," according to Rocky Barilla, Oregon legislative counsel and associate professor at the University law school.

"When we (in the United States) want cheap labor, we let in aliens," said Barilla. "But when we think the economy's suffering, we suddenly don't need them anymore."

In an analysis of the history of the death penalty, Clifford Freeman and Roosevelt Robinson of the Multnomah County public defender's and district attorney's offices, respectively, argued that the death sentence has had a bias toward minorities.

Those who are executed, said Freeman, "are, in the words of Don Clark (recent candidate for Oregon secretary of state), 'never the rich, seldom the white, and sometimes the innocent.'"

Robinson is also an opponent of the death penalty. "We have a trend in this country that is moving away from rehabilitation and toward vindictive justice," he said.

Native American Issues Committee activist Norman Riddle discussed the problems currently facing Northwest Indians, such as treaty and fishing rights, restoration of tribal status and religious freedom.

"We're fighting for things that should be taken for granted, that should already be ours," Riddle said.

He added that lobbying for Indian rights laws such as the Indian Child Welfare Act "has taught us how to organize — that we can enact legislation if we get together."

The final session examined the Ethnic Heritage Protection Act, which seeks to ensure that children of Asian refugees are kept within their familial and cultural surroundings in the event that their parents can no longer care for them.

"The state is currently saying that they are more able to decide what is best for our children than we are," said Ronalt Catalani of the Southeast Asian Legal Defense Project in Salem. "They are imposing their cultural norms upon Asian societies."

Weisha Mize of the Oregon State Bar's Affirmative Action Program spoke at lunch about the need for greater minority participation in the legal fields.

"The legal profession is stale," Mize said. "It needs to be challenged with alternate perspectives. Very little in the law reflects the values of minority communities."

In his keynote address, Bell related the story of a conversation he had with a cab driver named Jesse Semple on the way to New York's Kennedy Airport.

According to Bell, the cabbie, named after a famous literary character of black author Langston Hughes' books, believed the achievements of Martin Luther King Jr. and the holiday honoring him were nothing but "a bunch of bogus freedom checks that (the white establishment) never intends to honor."

Bell related his response. "Symbols have been the mainstay of the faith that someday blacks might truly be free in this land of freedom," he said.

"If people of color retain their belief in the symbols of freedom, and at least some whites come to see beyond the destructive symbol of racism," concluded Bell, "then anything could happen. On that point, I think even Jesse B. Semple would agree."

Isreali plan denounced

Recent proposal to withdraw forces tagged 'propoganda'

By Paul Ertelt
Of the Emerald

Isreal's recently announced plan to withdraw its forces from southern Lebanon is only "propoganda" to disguise its intention to annex the area, a Lebanese native said Friday.

Ali El-Haj spoke to about a dozen people at a "teach in" in Room 101 EMU, an event sponsored by the Organization of Arab Students and the Foreign Students Organization. El-Haj, who is teaching and working on a doctorate in psychology at the University of Michigan, is from the Nabatyah area of southern Lebanon.

"I am opposed to the whole negotiations between (Isreal) and the Lebanese government, because negotiations are only to gain time and legitimize the occupation," he said in an interview Friday. The Isreali government last week announced plans for a phased withdrawal from the area it has occupied since a 1982 invasion.

"What is going on in south Lebanon is the same thing that's happening on the West Bank. They don't even have an intention of moving," he said.

El-Haj said Isreal's building of extensive defense and water projects on the Awali River is evidence of their true intentions.

"They're not building a \$750 million project to give it as a gift to the Lebanese people," he said.

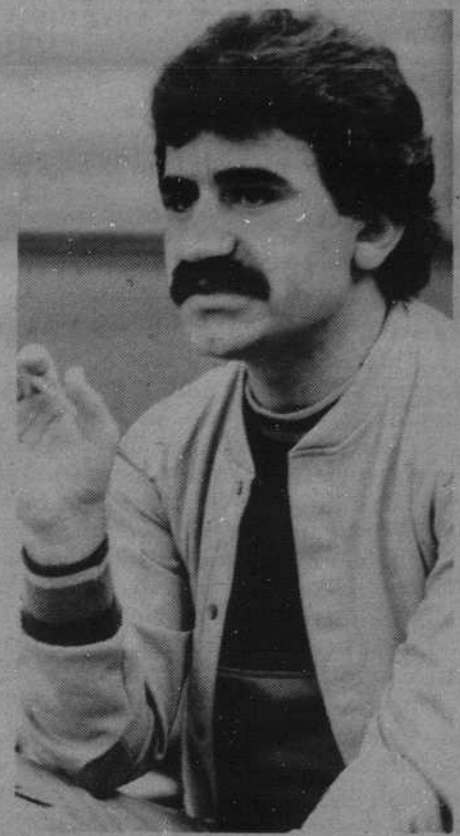
Also, all street signs in south Lebanon are now in Hebrew. This not only allows the Isreali army ease in moving about the region, but conditions the local people to Isreali rule, he said.

El-Haj characterizes the Isreali occupation as brutal and repressive, and calls the Isreali government "facist." Those in southern Lebanon who speak out against the occupation are arrested and taken to Insar Prison, he said.

"These prisons are built exactly like Nazis built prisons when they were executing Jews," he said. "Torture is going on every day to the people who are put in this prison."

Recently, the bodies of 44 people who had been held at Insar were found in Isreal, he said. The United Nations is investigating the incident.

Censorship by the Isreali govern-



Ali El-Haj

ment and lack of access by reporters to the prison area, have prevented the American media from reporting the situation there. But El-Haj believes the American media are heavily biased toward Isreal.

"The media is really projecting only Isreali ideology. It only promotes the plans and ideology of Isreal," he said. "This media always portrays the people resisting occupation as terrorists and always portrays the occupiers as keepers of peace in the area."

El-Haj sees the key to peace in the area in creating a secular state of Isreal. Though he believes Isreal has a right to exist, the ideas of democracy are incompatible with a religious state, he said.

"The whole starting point is wrong. You can't call it the Jewish state of Isreal and be democratic."

For the current situation, El-Haj believes only a military solution will work. The Isrealis will only withdraw if they realize they are unable to control the area, he said.

El-Haj is a firm supporter of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, a guerilla force composed of members of various factions of southern Lebanon.

"Isreal must withdraw its forces from Lebanon without any conditions," he said.

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