

editorial

Abortion is symptom, not cause of problem

The administration, in deciding to ask the Supreme Court to reverse the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion, is barking up the wrong tree. Abortion is a symptom, not a cause. Unwanted pregnancy is the cause of the problem. Instead of forcing women who want abortions into seeking illegal or self-induced abortions, the administration should attempt to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies.

But, ironically, the administration that is now asking for a ban on abortion, is the same administration that has cut all federal funds from the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and cut a substantial chunk of funds from the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. A primary function of these organizations is to prevent unwanted pregnancy, and thus abortion, through education and birth control.

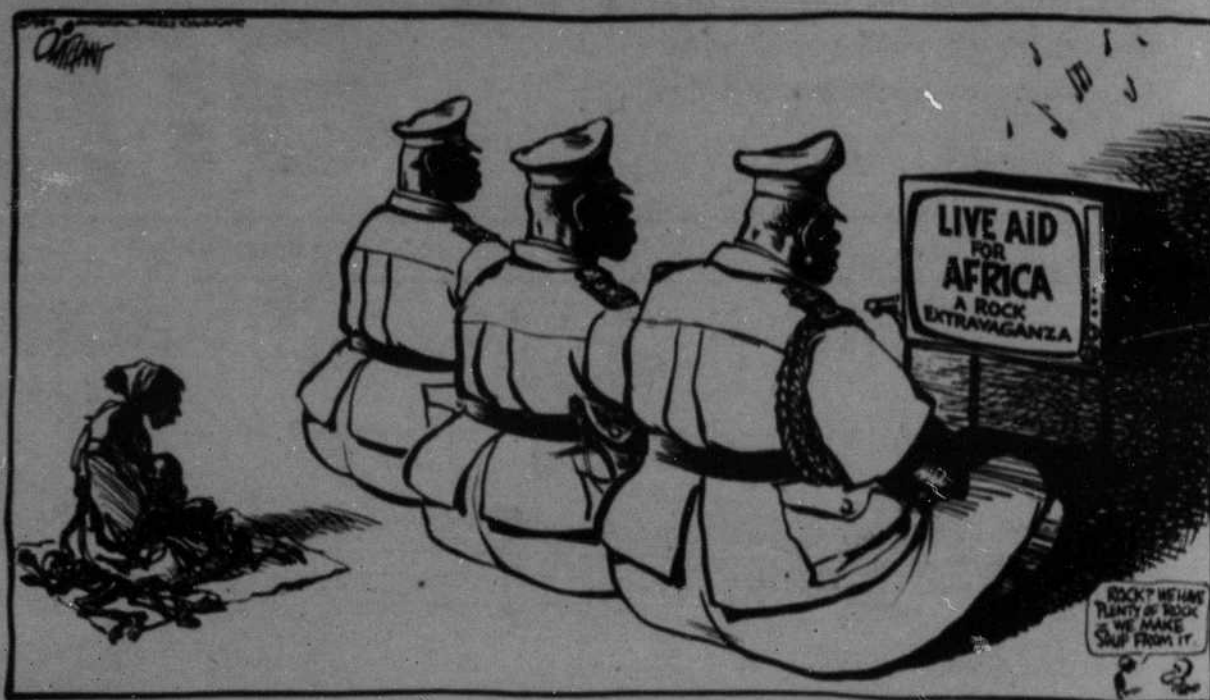
The administration cut funding of Planned Parenthood clinics, some of which perform abortions, in order to stop federal funding of abortion. But the largest single source of federal funding of family planning clinics is through Title 10, the funds of which are prohibited from funding abortions. Primarily because of Title 10 slashing, the clinics that have remained open have been forced to eliminate programs. Also, in addition to hundreds of thousands of unintended pregnancies that could have been prevented, the Portland Planned Parenthood affiliate reports that its federal funding isn't nearly enough to cover the costs of treating low-income patients. So women who can least afford to have an unwanted pregnancy are the ones threatened with the loss of family planning services.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute, a research affiliate of Planned Parenthood, estimates that the cuts will actually cost money. It was estimated that during the 1970s, for every dollar spent to fund family planning clinics, \$2 for short-term health care and welfare costs for the following year was saved. For teen-agers, \$3 was saved. In other words, family planning clinics were able to prevent pregnancies that would have resulted in these costs. Also, according to a 1984 estimate by the National Center for Health Statistics, one-half of all welfare payments in the United States are made to women who gave birth as teen-agers.

The administration also sought to undermine the effectiveness of the clinics through the so-called "squeal rule" that would have required notification of the parents of teenage girls seeking prescription birth control. The delusion blinding the administration and other "squeal rule" supporters is that if birth control is not available, young people will quit having sex. But a 1982 Guttmacher study revealed that the policy would prevent 25 percent of all teen-agers from visiting family planning clinics, but only two percent would quit having sex. The obvious outcome? More unwanted teen-age pregnancies. And even though the proposal was never enacted, teen-age visits to family planning clinics dropped considerably because teen-agers heard about the proposal and thought that it was in effect.

It is also surprising that people opposed to abortion are also frequently opposed to sex education. Keeping young people in the dark about sex and pregnancy isn't going to prevent anyone from having sex. Instead, young people will receive misinformation about sex and birth control, which will lead to disease and unwanted pregnancy.

No one likes abortion. Instead of bickering over who should or should not get an abortion, self-avowed "pro-choice" and "pro-life" activists should combine forces to battle the real problem, the preponderance of unwanted pregnancies that occur each year.



letters

Classification

The resolution by the Eugene Planning Committee that companies locating facilities in the proposed high technology research park not be permitted to do research or development there which "the clearly foreseeable and probable result of which, or any specific purpose of which, is to destroy human life or to incapacitate human beings," while probably well intended, is exactly the kind of resolution I would want the University to adopt if I were the head of a firm planning to do chemical-biological warfare research there.

No University committee could ever control what went on there under such a vague non-committal resolution. Any attempt to do so would be endlessly frustrated in haggling over definitions, and, if the research were classified, the committee wouldn't even know what they were dealing with.

Chemical-biological warfare research is typical of many kinds of secret research likely to be done there, which would benefit most from association with our scientists and experts in molecular genetics, biochemistry, etc., and which could be done under the guise of innocent basic research.

If research and development is consonant with the spirit of science, and with the best interests of humanity, it can be done openly.

We must insist that any work done at, or in association with, our University, be open.

NO CLASSIFIED RESEARCH. PERIOD!

This, at least, is clear and unambiguous, and would better approach what the planning committee is trying to accomplish (or evade).

Bayard McConaughy
Biology

Constitution

The Emerald's observation (ODE, July 11) that the Supreme Court's recent church/state "rulings were based on interpretations of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment..." is like saying that Opus the penguin's ditty "Hey big mama, I'm a-leavin' you..." (The Register Guard, July 7) is based on "interpretations" of Mozart's "Love Trilogy."

Opus' musical "interpretations" are better described as transmutations since they bear no resemblance to historical reality.

Which brings me to the subject of constitutional history: You folks should look into it. Begin by reading Justice William Rehnquist's 22-page dissent in the Alabama case. Rehnquist, says columnist George Will (The Register Guard, July 7), "served up a historical essay proving that the authors of the Establishment Clause intended to prevent partiality toward any particular sect, not to require neutrality between religion and irreligion."

After that, read John Whitehead's, "The Second American Revolution." Whitehead serves up a 212-page historical essay proving that the authors of the Establishment Clause intended to prevent partiality toward any particular Christian sect, not to require neutrality between Christianity and secularism.

Whitehead also shows how modern methods of constitutional "interpretation" can transmute the words "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." (please note the latter clause) into the Emerald's apparent preference: "Students in Bugtussle should not be allowed to meet in public school classrooms to read the Bible and pray."

Tom Visoky
Journalism

Live Aid

There is a bitter misanthropy evident throughout Diana Elliott's comments on the Live Aid concert (ODE, July 16). Certainly, there are many actions and commitments that can be pursued in the cause of ending world hunger beyond a rock 'n' roll telethon, and virtually everyone who participated as entertainers or viewers would agree. But Diana begrudges these people their charitable actions for motives that are dishonest and apparently self-deceptive. (Perhaps her self-esteem rises by putting other people down.)

First of all, \$70 million is not a "trivial" sum, anywhere, anyhow. Second, "stop-gap measures" are exactly what is needed, right now, here in the real world. Diana seems to prefer that drought victims in Africa starve to death, rather than receive short term aid for long term problems. Third, the concert was expressly for world hunger relief, not just Ethiopia. Fourth, the sacrifice and commitment of many people involved with Live Aid, most notably, Bob Geldorf, was obvious from the fact that the whole thing worked. When she disparages the motives of the entertainers, Diana seems jealous of their success as fund-raisers — let along of their other successes.

Finally, let us honor Peace Corps volunteers and work for substantial change to end world hunger, but not at the expense of other peoples' charity. World hunger is a big problem with a long way to go. Every little bit from everyone helps.

Hershel Stern
Graduate Student
Geography

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