

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Injection: The easy way to die

Last week the Oregon House of Representatives, with fourteen dissenting votes, voted to mandate execution of convicted murderers by lethal injection. This bill was passed to make execution more humane. A side effect is the saving of money — about \$300,000 — that it will take to build a new gas chamber.

Opponents of the bill state that this method of execution — closely resembling medical treatment — would gloss over and hide the horrors of execution — allowing the people of Oregon to ignore the executions taking place under their jurisdiction.

An *Oregonian* article written by Wilma Hogle, the instigator of the bill, points out the niceties of this method of execution:

- "Just before execution, the inmate will be moved from the holding cell to the execution room. Before doing so, the inmate shall be secured on a portable stretcher. The inmate's arms, legs and chest shall be restrained. A trained medical employee shall insert a catheter into a vein. Then the inmate shall be moved into the execution room on the stretcher.

- "The bottle(s) of fluid shall be passed through a paneled area behind the stretcher where the person(s) who will inject the lethal substance into the catheter is located. At this point only the warden, deputy warden, the physician and medical technician and person(s) administering the flow of the lethal substance are in the room. Witnesses are in a separate room.

- "Once the medical technician has prepared the inmate, the examining physician shall inspect the catheter and monitoring equipment and determine that the fluid will flow into the vein. The warden shall read the judgement to the inmate and ask if the inmate has any last comments. After such comments, if any, the warden shall order the execution to begin.

- "At this time the person(s) behind the screened partition of the room shall begin the flow of the ultrashort-acting barbiturate. Administration of the substance shall continue until such time as the physician pronounces the inmate to be dead.

"A physician does not have the task of administering a lethal injection. His chief function is limited to the monitoring duties performed at executions by any means — to pronounce the prisoner dead."

This article — though written with the best of intention by one who opposes capital punishment — becomes more gruesome with rereading. It makes the act of execution so clothed in sterile medical procedures that only those who receive the dead body will remember that a human being has been killed.

Although perhaps easing the pain of execution for the criminal, this bill goes far to ease the conscience of the collective executor.

We agree with those who believe that the people of Oregon — who voted to reinstate capital punishment — must be forced to face the consequences of that vote and those who still have some doubts about this system of "justice" made to suffer over each and every execution.

No one has mentioned the "cruel and inhumane" treatment for those who have to carry out the death penalty — those doctors and medical personnel who will be perverting their purpose and the prison superintendent and personnel who are hired to "rehabilitate" but must kill.

Perhaps if we really must have executions in Oregon, it should be performed by our highest elected official — the Governor. The Governor is elected to uphold the laws of the State — and he is the person who has the power to commute the death sentence. Let him be the one to make the final decision to kill or not to kill.

LUTHER



By Brumsic Brandon, Jr.



Inmates support private visits

(Continued from page 1 col. 3)

brace. But no longer than necessary — like about 3 seconds. The inmate must then sit in his assigned seat across a table from his guest, and either to hold hands, or put them in his own lap. He can not put his hand in any way on his visitors face, hair, leg or any other part of their person.

"If during your visit your guest has an emotional out-burst (crying) the inmate is not allowed to give aid at this depressing sight. The inmate must remain in his assigned seat. In no way is the inmate allowed to help. If the inmate does give aid, his visit will be terminated and the inmate will receive a disciplinary report for this major infraction. No physical contact other than the first embrace and kiss is allowed. This is called a no contact system.

"Supervision is at its maximum. Each visitor is restricted to his/her assigned seat for the duration of the visit. Now the only exception is, you can use the rest room, and buy junk foods and drinks. But all of these things must be done alone.

"Now at the end of each visit you and your guest are allowed to walk to the doorway and have that last embrace and kiss. But again, you will take no longer than three seconds or less."

Children, also, are unable to receive affection from their fathers or to share a private conversation. They are put in the position of competing with their mothers and siblings for a few minutes of their fathers' time.

The inmates propose that ten 12 x 28 foot trailer units be leased to create 20 units with kitchen and bedroom. Thus each inmate would have use of the facility each 30 to 60 days. If the Legislature does not allocate funds, the inmates propose to finance the units with a use-fee so the facilities would pay for themselves.

The State Street Jaycees surveyed 25 other states. California, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri and North Carolina have furloughs or home

leave plans where prisoners can leave the institution to be with their families. Minnesota and New York have family visits inside the institution. Pennsylvania has programs such as picnics, sports activities, etc. inside the institution for family members.

OSP Superintendent Hoyt Cupp told the Judiciary Committee that he has no objection to family visits but has other priorities for limited funds. Stating that there are many men in the prison who do not have jobs and having no money will "sell their bodies for a pack of cigarettes", he prefers to spend the prison's funds to expand the vocational training program and the prison industries program. He speculated that expanding the prison industries program, which makes furniture for state agencies, might raise money to support the family visit program.

Cupp had no opposition to the Legislature passing enabling legislation and allowing the institution to find funds when and where possible.



Survival

by N. Fungai Kumbula

The last Congressional elections saw the ousting of Representative Charles Diggs (D. Mich.) as chairman of the House Africa subcommittee. He was replaced by Representative Stephen Solarz (D. N.Y.). He was ousted as a result of his legal problems. That same election also saw Senator Dick Clark (D. Iowa) lose his Senate seat to a Roger Jepsen, an obscure Republican State Senator. If you recall, in last week's column, his name cropped up in connection with the South African influence peddling scandal code named 'Muldergate.'

Eschel Rhoddie, the central figure in the scandal and the man who was in charge of South Africa's sinister efforts at manipulating American politics, charged that Jepsen was one of the people who received secret South African contributions to help him defeat Senator Clark who had been one of South Africa's better critics in the U.S. Congress.

Even though there were now more conservatives on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, (Hayakawa had joined so he could speak up for both Rhodesia and South Africa), I had been of the opinion that the direction of the committee would not change that much due to the leadership provided by its new chairman, Senator George S. McGovern. I had, however, expressed strong reservations about the kind of leadership

Representative Solarz would provide.

The first major Congressional foreign policy issue has recently shown that I was 180 off the mark. The debate in question was over the sending of a team of a Congressional observers to Rhodesia to monitor the elections as a prelude to the lifting of sanctions and the resumption of trade with the regime to be borne out of this electoral charade.

I expected McGovern, with his reputation for liberalism, to oppose this plan, to be able to see it for what it was (or is), a simple ploy to prop up a puppet Black regime while leaving effective power in the hands of the whites. I expected him to be able to see that it was designed merely to win international approval so the West could come to the rescue of the tottering Smith regime and not really change anything as far as Zimbabwe's Black masses were concerned. I even expected him to oppose the plan also on the grounds that it would legitimize an illegal regime and prolong the suffering in Zimbabwe.

But, what did he do? He was actually one of the sponsors of the resolution (along with Hayakawa)! And his committee voted 5-1 to send the observers! Thus misled, the full Senate voted and passed the resolution and sent it to the House. The long dissenting vote came from Senator Charles Percy (R. Ill.).

In the House Africa subcommittee, Representative Solarz took up the bill and led the fight opposing passage. As a result, the committee, following his good leadership, rejected the bill by a vote of 9-0. So, to all intents and purposes, the idea of U.S. observers at the Rhodesian 'elections' is dead. Needless to say, this deals a severe blow to Smith's plans and delivers a tremendous psychological uplift to the freedom fighters. We may have lost quite a few lately but, this one big victory calls for a celebration: CHEERS!

There has been talk of sending private individuals but that too seems to be fizzling out. For one thing, they would not carry as much weight as a Congress sponsored team and for another, the time element seems to rule that out. The charade (elections) is due to start in eleven days. Without U.S. monitors, the Smith regime will fail in its one most crucial objective: recognition by the U.S. and the West and a repeal of the economic sanctions that have plagued the regime for the past fourteen years.

We sincerely hope that McGovern was simply suffering from the effects of the very severe South Dakota snowstorms. It would certainly be a catastrophe if this unholy alliance (McGovern — Hayakawa) were to continue to bloom to fruition. To Representative Solarz and his Africa subcommittee, BRAVO!

Letters to the Editor

Conjugal visits right, not privilege

To the Editor:

I am a prisoner and have read Deone Washington's thoughts on conjugal visits. A bill to pass this is not going to be all that much help. The prison has different ways to deny any kind of pass, that is why I'm writing. They won't like this but I believe the constitution states something about freedom of speech.

I was married February 9, 1979, our wedding picture appeared in the *Statesman* and the *Oregonian*. Someone even gave me a copy from Grants Pass. I have asked for two passes to go and be with him but both were denied.

The next time I asked for a pass the person who was to come and get me had to have a police check done before they could even attempt to pick me up. The poor man, in searching for an apartment he fell on a stairwell because of his crutches. The last day I saw him he had run out of money and he came walking on those crutches down the prison road to see me before he returned to Portland to see his doctor.

I had put in for a second pass and had talked to him that morning when he told me he was very ill. This was the morning he was preparing to return to Portland. While I was speaking to an officer, she turned and said, "Isn't that your husband walking down the road?" I looked and sure enough slowly and surely he was on his way to say goodbye.

We needed that approval on the pass to go get his things packed. I asked for a few hours. I don't know if you can picture a man on crutches and the other knee injured trying to pack anything? Can you picture him walking up a long road in a lot of pain as a car goes right by and sprays gravel on him, never even hesitating to stop. He was very tearful by the time he got to see me, but he came to say he was going back to Portland for medical help because he couldn't get any help or find an apartment in Salem. He did not tell me all the time

we were drinking coffee in the visiting room that that was his last \$2. He told me just before he left. He went in to see if I could go help him and it was denied. It took me some time to find out the reason why. I was blamed for something another girl with the same first name did. Also because of a poor floor report. Well, I checked that too — they were all good but two — one for being too depressed and the other for complaining too much. No violence, no uncooperation. Nothing. This is the reason for denial. The prison will be angry at me for saying these things but the truth is truth.

My reason was very different. I was taken about 1/2 hour after my wedding back to the prison. My husband and I have never been together in any way except the prison visiting room. I regard this as highly unfair, our whole marriage so far has been tears. He may not be physically able to carry on a "conjugal visit" but the mere fact of being together, especially at the first of the marriage is an imminent factor in rehabilitation. I have considered the choice of annulment due to the prison methods.

What good would it do to pass a law that the prison can override with a very simple excuse?

All these things definitely need to be considered by the Legislature before passing it. I agree it is highly difficult to maintain a good attitude or anything else in prison, you on the street do not realize the extreme mental pressure of being locked up. The natural processes of life can not and

will not stop regardless of how the body is locked up. As Deone said, the mind still lives. When you are sentenced the judge does not and is not able to say, "you got five years, take their brain and put it in storage until sentence is over . . . put the body in the pen."

The "conjugal visit" is a vital necessity for the retaining of a good marriage in all areas; from aiding the one in prison, to really putting forth the effort to gain release sooner. Also, I think that the Legislature should enter a clause for all applying for such visits that the prison could not deny. Such a visit may be set up for certain times of the month, possibly even limiting where the couple can go. I think people would see a big change in the penal system by taking this particular appeal to heart and see that it is granted. Also it would save on taxes. A few visits with your loved one and the desire to maintain a straight life by visits that are desired by society. I, as a prisoner, realize what a difference it would make. There would not be the crowding of the prisons as they are now and much less problems in the prison. Society is out to save money and this is a sure way of doing it. Does society want a debilitated person or a truly rehabilitated person?? A prisoner is what you make them. Other states have "modernized" their penal system. Why is Oregon behind?

Name withheld by request
OWCC

'Survival' explores oppression

(Continued from page 1 col. 6)

back in New York. For me, it was a trip in time; for you it will be an unforgettable experience. SURVIVAL cannot be praised, it is its own triumph. Presented in twelve languages: Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho, Pedi, Shangaan, Tsonga, Swazi, Ndebele, English and Afrikaans, it is the most meaningful, the most powerful play I have ever seen, and I have been around quite a long time.

Selaelo Maredi has written another play "Homeland" with Steve Friedman of New York's Modern Times Theater. He has expressed interest in seeing that performed by a local theater group.

Whatever you do this week, don't miss SURVIVAL! If you never see another play again for the next five years, at least see SURVIVAL. If you don't, you will not only miss one of the most important plays ever to hit the stage, you will also have robbed yourself of the most culturally enriching presentations ever. All performances are FREE.

"Selaelo, Fana, Themba Lo Seth, Umfana wekhaya uti Amhlope!" (Please see Community Calendar, page 6 col. 1)

Nuclear rally

(Continued from page 1 col. 3)

National Lawyers Guild, Southern Oregon Safe Energy Committee, Forelows on Board, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Pebble Springs Project, Oregonians for Utility Reform, Columbia Environmental Council, Business and Professional People for Sane Energy, Mobilization for Survival, University of Oregon Survival Center and the Hanford Conversion Project.

For additional information call 222-1963 or 234-6944 in Portland or 287-8121 or 686-4356 in Eugene.

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