

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Remember them, too

This week the nation is celebrating Vietnam Veterans Week -- honoring those men and women who served in Vietnam. The Vietnam veterans were not welcomed home as heroes, like the men who had come home from other wars.

The stigma of an unpopular war still follows these veterans. In the words of the President, "instead of glory, they were too often met with our embarrassment or ignored when they returned." These veterans have not had the care, the opportunities and the respect they deserve. They are still met with embarrassment or ignored.

While we pause this week to honor these veterans and pledge to renew our efforts to insure that our government no longer ignores them, we must also remember the men who left the country or went to jail to demonstrate their opposition to an illegal and immoral war. They, too, suffered and served.

Two bad bills

SEnate Bill 358 will go to hearings in the Senate Committee on Aging and Minority Affairs next week. This bill, sponsored by Senator Anthony Meeker, would put a one year limit on the

authority of the Civil Rights Bureau to investigate and resolve civil rights complaints.

In other words, if the Civil Rights Bureau failed to investigate, conciliate and settle a complaint within one year, the rights of the complainant would be lost.

In light of Oregon's record of taking from four to five years to complete a civil rights case, this would be a travesty of justice and would deny the citizen's legal recourse. It is a green light for discrimination.

A related bill is being introduced to the House - HB 3147 -- at the request of Representative Max Rijken. This bill would amend the law to allow public meetings to be held in places that discriminate -- lodge buildings and the like. Currently, no governmental body can meet in a place where discrimination because of race, creed, color, sex or national origin is practiced.

HB 3147 would allow public meetings to be held in places where discrimination is practiced if no other adequate facilities are regularly available and if no person is denied access to the meeting. This bill would place the State's stamp of approval on discriminatory organizations.

Persons opposed to these bills should make their voices heard. It is true that no good bills seem to be getting through the legislature this session, and maybe there is no need to worry. But then, it just might be easier for a bad bill to slip through.

A statement of Principles by Vietnam Veterans

As veterans of the illegal "war that never happened," we exist so that fellow veterans may one day soon receive the legal rights earned by serving in that war; we exist so that the leaders and people of America may forever be conscious of the injustice done to her sons and daughters of the Vietnam era.

We, the hidden minority, stand with other oppressed minorities as peaceful soldiers in the war for social justice.

We advocate that veterans have the right to jobs, training, and medical and mental-health care prescribed by law and demanded by social justice. We deplore the fact that hundreds of thousands of veterans are denied these rights by the very governmental agencies that are supposed to be helping them. It is time for society to stop ignoring veterans and their problems.

Both society and the government were responsible for drafting minors and other young men into the last war. Neither society nor government seems to be willing to acknowledge or repay veterans for the painful changes that occurred in their lives fighting for a country that did not care.

Many veterans feel they were manipulated and cheated by the political decisions made while they were in the military. As veterans now, we are distrustful and often insensitive to human values. Our youthful idealism was corrupted by having to kill or be killed, while at home society became indifferent toward those trapped in the fighting in Vietnam.

At Project Return-VETS, we attempt to help rectify those injustices by finding employment and training for veterans, by helping get less-than-honorable discharges upgraded, and by providing mental-health counseling. We also attempt to educate the public, including other veterans, about possible solutions for these problems. We stress helping disabled veterans, combat veterans, and minority veterans -- those most affected by the violence of the war and American society.

We support urgently needed changes in social policy, as follows:

1. Responsive and innovative medical treatment for veterans from the Veterans Administration must be

available.

2. Recognition of, and subsequent treatment for, the delayed-stress reaction suffered by veterans must be adequately funded by the federal government.

3. A national network of veterans' self-help groups to supply services to Vietnam veterans and to function as "watch dogs" for all services to veterans must be encouraged, facilitated, and funded by the federal government.

4. American society must be awakened to the fact that refusal to openly accept veterans back home and back into their communities has contributed to the unique problems of Vietnam-era veterans.

With the wisdom gained from serving in the Vietnam war, we further serve to teach our sons and daughters so that they, armed with our knowledge, may question the next "Vietnam" and be spared the horrors of our generation.

(This statement was adopted in December, 1978, by the staff of Project Return-VETS.)



Namibia's own 'internal settlement'

by N. Fungai Kumbula

Namibia has been likened to Rhodesia for so many reasons. For one, along with South Africa, they are the only countries in southern Africa still under minority colonial domination. The only other country in Africa still suffering the same fate is Western Sahara at the moment jointly occupied by Morocco and Mauritania. In both Rhodesia and Namibia, the white number less than a quarter of a million in each country. Both have also been involved in long, costly and unwinnable guerrilla wars. In Namibia, which has been administered by South Africa since the end of World War I (the original League of Nations mandate that had given South Africa this power was revoked in 1966 but South Africa still refuses to quit), South Africa is providing the troops that are opposing the African freedom fighters. In Rhodesia, the Ian Smith regime has relied very heavily on South Africa for both military and economic sustenance.

Now, a new dimension has been added to this long list of analogies. In Rhodesia, Ian Smith forged an 'internal agreement' with three, moderate Black "leaders" that culminated in the holding of elections last month that installed a Black "dominated" government. Black "dominated" is a misnomer because whites still control all the instruments of power: the army, the police force, the civil service, the judiciary and have been guaranteed effective veto power for at least ten years. Though they make up less than four per cent of the population, they have been

assigned 28% of the Assembly seats and 30% of the Cabinet positions.

In Namibia, the UN, through the five Western 'Powers', the U.S., Britain, France, Canada and West Germany has been negotiating with South Africa for a solution to the Namibian problem. SWAPO (South West Africa Peoples Organization) recognized by the UN as the sole representative of the Namibian people has been waging an armed struggle against South Africa's occupation since 1966. (The Patriotic Front launched its initial attack on settler occupation in 1966 too. However, the present campaign started in 1972.)

The UN negotiations have met with one roadblock after another. Last September, an apparent agreement was reached when South Africa agreed to have elections held in Namibia under the supervision of the UN and, SWAPO had also agreed to participate. However, South Africa already had initiated its own version of elections which it was going to supervise. SWAPO had rejected this idea as did the UN. Nonetheless, December 4th through the 8th last year, South Africa went ahead with these elections which SWAPO boycotted and which the UN declared "null and void". At the time South Africa claimed that this was a 'trial run' for the later elections that would be overseen by the UN.

As was expected, the elections were won by the so-called Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, a coalition of moderate Blacks and whites which

had the financial, material and political backing of South Africa. Even though South Africa had all along maintained that this was nothing more than a 'trial run,' she has suddenly changed tunes and now claims that these were the 'real' elections and is also now talking about turning over the administrative powers to the constituent assembly that was formed as a result of these 'elections.'

This in effect leaves SWAPO out in the cold just as Smith left the Patriotic Front out of his 'internal settlement'. Further, South Africa is also now reneging on her original promise to allow UN supervised elections to be held. For SWAPO, the only option now left is an intensification of the war. The UN, for its part, has been meeting this past week to decide the next step.

One of the options supposedly under consideration is the imposition of economic sanctions against South Africa but this is a course that has repeatedly been vetoed by Britain, France and the U.S. The election of a new Conservative government in Britain does not help matters any at all. So, for the time being at least, there's one three letter word that hovers over everything else: WAR.

P.S.: To Sunanda Sen,

Thank you for pointing out my very serious omission of Indira Gandhi as one of the five women to lead their countries. She was in my original draft but, somewhere between that initial draft and the finished copy, she 'sneaked' away.

N. Fungai Kumbula

'Free market' keeps medical costs high

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

One of the most curious concepts to come along in quite a while is the growing notion that America has too many doctors. Just try telling that to minorities and the poor, who frequently live in rural areas or urban neighborhoods that have no doctors at all.

It's the old story of looking at gross figures. The annual output of new doctors has doubled in the past two decades. But that doesn't mean they practice where the people who need their skills live. Nor does it mean they are in specialties most needed by the average health consumer.

Still, the so-called doctor shortage is an excuse for support for cutting federal aid to medical schools. It's even being used as a rationale for opposing a national health insurance plan.

It is argued that the more doctors there are, the more people will use them, and the more inflationary will health costs become.

Strange. At the same time, we're told that the law of supply and demand has not been repealed. The more there is available of a good or service, the lower its price is likely to become.

But that doesn't hold true for health care. Why? The answer is that organized medicine operates like an internal OPEC monopoly, freed from the normal constraints of the marketplace. Free-for-service medicine keeps health care costs

high, as does the cost-plus insurance system.

It's hard to understand the argument that it's bad if people use physician's services more often. If more people use more doctors, that obviously means they need those doctors and the health care they provide.

Whenever sales of some consumer item increases we never say that's bad. We recognize that people want more of that item and business takes steps to supply it. But why then do we say that items in human services, like health care, should be carefully rationed and kept limited?

Those limits are today imposed by excessive costs. If you can afford to pay a doctor you use his services, if you can't you don't. Poor people covered by Medicare and Medicaid programs have some access to health care since the government will pay for it. And there's been a rise in health services utilization since those programs were started.

That's good, it means more people are getting better health care. But millions of others are not. They don't have access to doctors. The financial structure of medical professions is such that esoteric specialties drain off many who in former years might have been general practitioners and family physicians.

The result is that some areas and people are not served at all, some are underserved, and relatively few have full access to the health care they need. So long as the nation's ghettos and barrios are virtually without

health practitioners, so long as many public hospitals would stop dead in their tracks without foreign trained physicians, and so long as medical professionals are maldistributed, America doesn't have too many doctors.

It's troubling that calls for limiting the numbers of doctors come just as Blacks and other minorities are gaining a tenuous foothold in medical schools.

Even with the rise in minority medical school enrollments, Blacks are only about two per cent of America's doctors. And while the total number of places in medical schools is increasing, the number of Blacks admitted is shrinking.

So in this post-Bakke era, calling for a doctor freeze is tantamount to calling for permanent minority underrepresentation in the medical profession.

The numbers of doctors should be increased. Incentives should be given to encourage them to practice in poverty neighborhoods and to prefer general practice to the kinds of specialties society needs less. Massive programs to increase the numbers of qualified minority health professionals should be a top priority, so that the most underserved and underrepresented communities get their fair share of health care.

And all of this should be in the framework of a national health policy that provides universal, comprehensive access to quality health care for all.

LUTHER



By Brumsic Brandon, Jr.



ALFRED L. HENDERSON
Editor/Publisher

PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Portland Observer (USPS 959-980) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

Subscriptions: \$7.50 per year in Tri-County area; \$8.00 per year outside Tri-County Area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

The Portland Observer's official position is expressed only in its Editorial column. Any other material throughout the paper is the opinion of the individual writer or submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Portland Observer.

National Advertising Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
New York

1st Place
Community Service
ONPA 1973

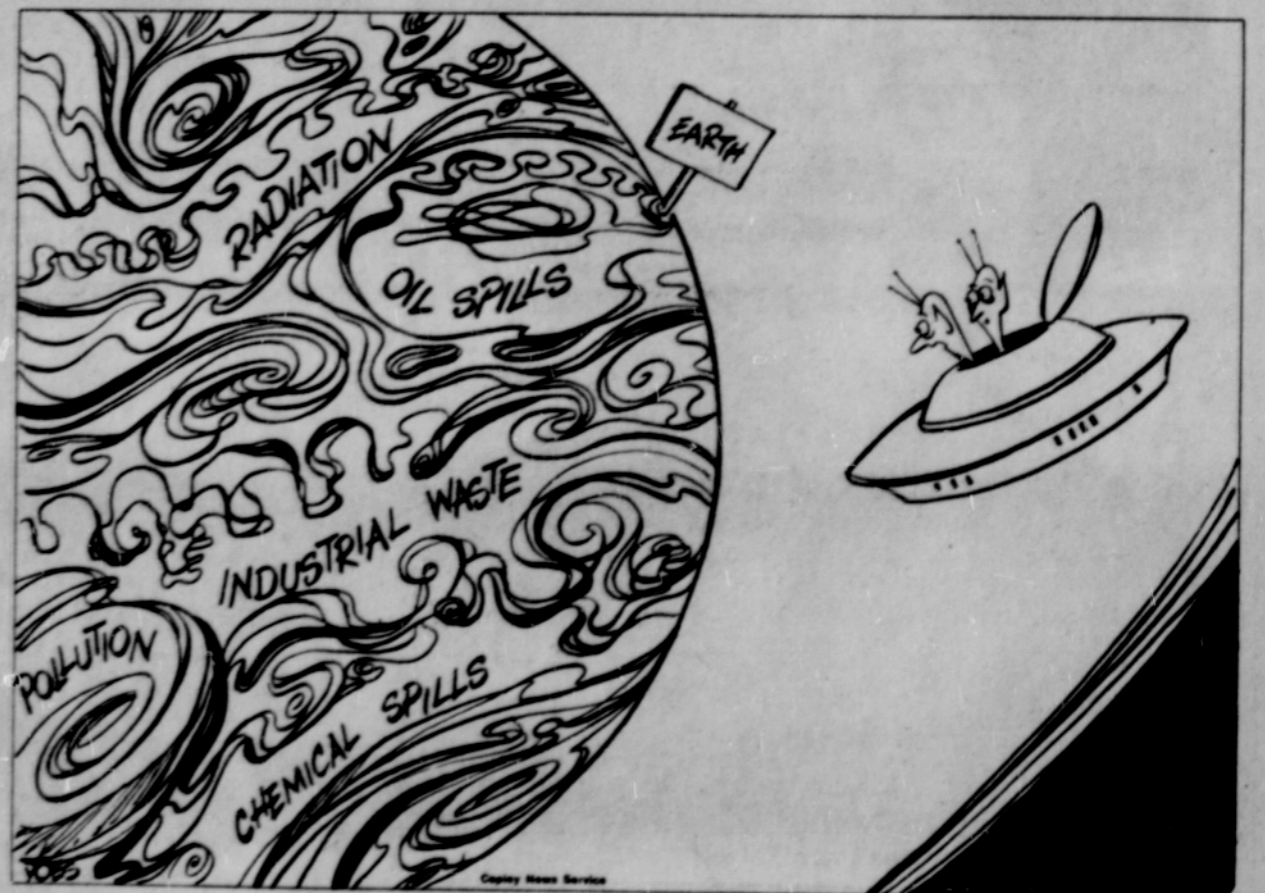
1st Place
Best Ad Results
ONPA 1973

5th Place
Best Editorial
NNPA 1973

Honorable Mention
Herrick Editorial Award
NNA 1973

2nd Place
Best Editorial
3rd Place
Community Leadership
ONPA 1975

3rd Place
Community Leadership
ONPA 1978



'IT LOOKS AN AWFUL LOT LIKE JUPITER!'