

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Salem Watch

Oregon needs plan for poor

More than 300,000 Oregonians are medically indigent. They do not have health insurance and are not eligible for medical aid and other assistance programs. They cannot pay for medical care.

Every one-percent increase in unemployment adds 8,000 persons who lose their job-related health insurance.

Some people receive charity: last year over \$150 million in charity health care was provided by doctors and hospitals. This "charity" was, of course, borne by paying patients, adding \$226 to the cost of each hospital stay last year. This brings increases in costs of health care and of insurance.

Other persons do not receive the medical care they need or put off health care until the condition is much more serious and costly. Lack of

medical care is not only life-threatening, but can have a detrimental effect for the rest of the person's life. Lack of prenatal care can adversely affect not only the child but generations to come.

House Bill 2805 would require the State of Oregon to adopt the optional part of the Medicaid Medically Needy Program, funded jointly by federal and state funds, with the federal government paying over half. Oregon is one of only 15 states that do not participate.

The Medically Needy Program would provide health care for approximately 65,000 low-income people—blind, disabled, aged, pregnant women, and children.

Support HB 2805. The first prerequisite to a productive society is a reasonable standard of health.

by Denny Scott, economist,
International Woodworkers of
America

After turning the thumb screws on the wood products industry for two years, President Reagan, with his brief visit to Klamath Falls, hopes some of the optimism over a predicted housing recovery will rub off in his direction. Reagan's optimism may be misplaced.

Highly dependent on the national housing market for their livelihood, members of the Oregon wood products industry would not have to search their memories long to recall this was the same President who applauded the strangulating money policies that drove housing construction to a 36-year low; the same President who vetoed the Lugar-AuCoin housing stimulus bill in 1982 that would have generated an estimated 200,000 new homes and given a pulse beat to the sinking industry; the same President who, had it not been for strong resistance in Congress, would have severely cut public housing programs last year.

If President Reagan's past policies were not enough to chill his reception from the wood products industry, the President's current policies will surely lose him some more Oregon friends. The Reagan Administration is currently opposing a timber contract relief bill which would permit some Oregon mills to resume operations with less costly public timber. More economical raw materials translates into more jobs for Oregon wood products workers.

Despite his quick walk through one mill and an upbeat speech on recovery, the President will have found few friends among wood products workers in Klamath Falls or anywhere else in Oregon. The President simply cannot smile away the memories of all those policies that have worked so consistently against lumber and plywood workers for the last two years.

Moving on to the next stop on his West Coast itinerary, the President left behind in Klamath Falls an industry still struggling to recover, an

industry in transition. 1983 should be an improved year, most observers are predicting, with housing starts from 30 percent to 40 percent above the 1982 low of 1.06 million units.

This modest, perhaps wobbly, recovery will be dependent upon the economic impact of decisions made thousands of miles from Klamath Falls. As long as the Federal Reserve Board maintains its course of expansionary monetary policies begun last summer, the wood products industry should thrive along with the construction industry. But if inflation starts to rise along with the federal budget deficit, Fed could very well tighten monetary policies and force interest rates upwards again. In such a case, the anticipated housing recovery would evaporate.

While the Fed seems momentarily committed to lower interest rates and economic recovery, just a few months ago it was equally committed to high interest rates. People close to the wood products industry will be closely watching the Federal Reserve Board in the months ahead.

What would a national surge of 1.3-1.4 million housing starts mean to the Oregon wood products industry? While it certainly would not mean full employment, some predictions can be made based on the 1.31 million units built in 1980. In that year, an average of 69,500 persons worked full-time in Oregon's logging, lumber and plywood industry; presently that figure is just 56,100. The state, then, can look forward to adding around 15,000 jobs if the 1.3-1.4 million houses are actually built. Still, this would be some 11,500 jobs fewer than the industry generated in 1979 when 1.7 million houses were started.

Regardless of any upswing in the housing market, Oregon's lumber economy will never be the same again. The industry is undergoing major changes—change that tends to reduce employment over time. On one hand, the new automated small log mills currently being constructed will require less labor for each thousand board feet of lumber produced. On the other, the North-

west will see a timber harvest decline as the volumes available from corporate forest lands fall. This problem is temporary, however, since in 20 to 30 years these same lands will be full of marketable second growth timber.

A third factor with less obvious influences on employment levels has been the shift in investment capital. For the past several years, capital expenditure surveys conducted by *Forest Industries* magazine have reflected the strong preference of Northwest forest products giants for locating new plants in southern states and in Canada. At the same time, many of the firms expanding in the South are closing mills in the Northwest. Such trends can only be interpreted as a systematic regional disinvestment strategy. Oregon's weakened employment outlook benefits little from the revelation of such a trend.

After underscoring these economic restraints and the problems involved in creating large numbers of new wood products jobs in the years ahead, it should be noted that the wood products industry is not one of those sunset industries doomed to fade out as the high tech industries bloom. Oregon's timberlands—especially the public ones—will continue to be a source of wealth and employment within our own state. How much wealth and how many jobs will be determined as much by political decisions as by economic ones. The political process will play a crucial role in providing the alternate sources of investment capital needed to develop better manufacturing processes, to promote new markets, to develop innovative products, and to find methods to utilize and stretch this limited resource.

So, as unemployed workers in Klamath Falls say good-bye to a President they never had a chance to see, Oregonians should all note that the recovery—when it does come—will not resemble the boom days of 1977-79. Oregon's solid wood industry will probably never again reach so grand a scale.

Child care continuing problem

The killing of a six-year-old child by a California policeman demonstrates once again the need for day care all over the country. The government continuously attempts to push mothers off of welfare and onto jobs, but has no commitment to child care services.

The need for child care has been a serious problem for years and one that is repeatedly discussed and studied. Federally funded child care programs have come and gone. In Portland, the War on Poverty programs once provided child care in centers and day-care homes in addition to the Headstart Program. These programs were for low-income families only, and only a skeleton remains. The Reagan administration continues to push for further restrictions on Headstart programs, the goal being to remove the child care aspects of the program, leaving only short-hour educational programs.

Child care and supportive services were provided for the children of Concentrated Employment Program (CEP) trainees. But all that is gone. CETA trainees and employees must fend for themselves.

Model Cities once guaranteed free child care for all families whose parents were working, in school or in training. Later fees were collected from middle and upper income families on a sliding scale. Care was provided in over 100 day care homes, several child care centers, and an

emergency center. Only one of the centers remains, and it pre-dated the Model Cities era.

The State commitment to child care for working welfare families is nil. The legislature—although expressing concern—has repeatedly failed to provide funds. When the federal money was gone the programs closed.

All over the state young children are left alone, with older siblings or with inadequate baby sitters. Lack of child care causes loss of work and lack of production due to the mothers' fears for their children's safety.

Kaiser was one of the early providers of child care—providing care for children while their parents worked in the shipyards during World War II. The Kaiser program was a model and proved that good child care improves productivity. Unfortunately, no major corporation chose to follow suit.

The federal government, the state government, the employers and the unions all have a responsibility to the workers and their children. The Kaiser and Headstart programs proved safe, educationally-oriented child care is beneficial to the family and child, and therefore to the employers and the government.

Surely a solution can be found to one of the nation's most serious problems if a solution is really sought. The lack of commitment is evidence of a lack of concern for the nation's children.

Letters to the Editor

To the editor:

We inmates at the Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP) have formed an Inmates Legislative Committee to track and propose bills dealing with corrections. This year we have proposed nine bills and would like people to be aware of our responsible involvement.

Since Judge Burns decided that

OSP is not overcrowded, we are experiencing increased tension in the prison; many inmates have viewed the Burns decision to mean that violence would bring intervention by the court system and thus they see violence as a way of bringing relief to the overcrowding problem. We have a real concern in this area.

Our purpose is to let both the outside and the inmates know what

things are being done and to demonstrate that people in and out of the prison are concerned with problems facing the prison system. Violence begets violence and it would undo much work done by many people.

Marvin Johnson
Chairman,
Inmates Legislative Committee
Oregon State Penitentiary

Non-aligned

(Continued from page 1 column 3)

reaction to the organization has changed. In 1961 the organization was largely ignored as an Afro-Asian organization with only one member from the Americas, Cuba. This February, when the Coordinating Bureau met in Managua to determine the 7th Summit's agenda, the U.S. went so far as to distribute a secret document to allies with instructions on how to protect U.S. interests at the meeting.

During the Second Summit, held in 1964 in Cairo, colonialism and neocolonialism in Latin America were condemned; Britain was asked to grant independence to Guyana; the U.S. blockade of Cuba was condemned; and it was lamented that several Caribbean nations were not yet free.

The summit asked for an examination of Puerto Rico's status by the United Nations Committee on Decolonization.

The U.S. was referred to as a col-

onial power for the first time at the 4th Summit Conference, referring to the status of Puerto Rico. The Summit demanded that "military bases of the U.S. in Cuba, Panama, and Puerto Rico be returned to the countries that are their rightful owners," supported the governments of President Salvador Allende in Chile and General Juan Velasco Alvarado in Peru, the efforts of Panama to regain the canal.

The 5th Summit Conference reiterated its stand on Puerto Rico, Cuba and Panama; expressed support of Guyana, Jamaica and Barbados, all faced with U.S.-inspired destabilization; supported Belize's right to independence and Argentina's claim to the Malvinas (Falklands), supported the attempts of Columbia, Ecuador, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela to regain control of their natural resources from foreign corporations, approved Cuba's aid to Angola.

By the time the 6th Summit was

held in 1979, seven Latin American countries belonged to the Movement: Argentina, Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. Bolivia, Grenada, Nicaragua and Surinam joined during the conference. Thirteen additional Latin American nations attended as observers.

Since 1979 the Movement has taken a harsher stand against the U.S., particularly condemning U.S. aggression in Central America and the Caribbean and U.S. support of South Africa and that nation's aggression against Angola, Mozambique and other black African nations.

With the increasing move by Latin American and African nations away from the U.S. sphere of influence, membership has grown to 100, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Nations provides a strong voice for the Third World Nations. Indira Gandhi, taking the helm from Fidel Castro, will attempt to steer a more moderate course.



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How Washington won

by Dr. Manning Marable
"From The Grassroots"

It would be inaccurate to suggest that Harold Washington's election was due solely to the powerful mandate of the Chicago black community. Members of the Democratic Socialists of America, a predominantly white formation, worked openly in the campaign. Communist Party members also supported Washington, as did hundreds of independent white leftists and community organizers. White City Council member Larry Bloom endorsed Washington, as did many white radical feminists and progressive trade union activists. Conversely, many black elected officials distanced themselves from the black Congressman. Black Democratic committeemen and aldermen as a group demonstrated once again greater loyalty to the machine than to their own constituents. Nevertheless, the success of Washington's campaign was from beginning to end a result of the forging of an independent black united front—ministers and Muslims, trade unionists and professionals, entrepreneurs and the unemployed. Of the roughly 365,000 blacks who cast votes in the Democratic primary, over 300,000 voted for Washington—at least 75 percent of his total electoral support. When the black vote is factored out, Washington received at best token support from the non-black electorate. It is clear, as in many other recent examples nationally, that race was the pivotal factor in the Chicago Democratic primary.

What does Washington's stunning victory mean for progressives? It seems hardly necessary to add that he must first defeat moderate Republican Bernard Epton in the April 12 general election. Already there are indications that a reactionary "white united front" is forming to close ranks behind Epton. The day after his election, U.S. Representative Gus Savage, another black South Side Democrat, told a *New York Times* reporter that "white people may see [Washington] as some sort of Black Panther." Liberal white Alderman Martin J. Oberman raised doubts

about Washington's ability to compromise with the machine-controlled City Council, declaring that "it's going to take years to accomplish even part of (his) goals."

Even if he is elected, Washington will have only months—not "years"—in solidifying his base and developing an appropriate strategy to carry out his liberal/left program. Washington has already promised to dismantle the corrupt patronage system, and not to require the 45,000 or so public employees under the mayor's power to support his politics. He has advocated a state tax hike for the nearly bankrupt school system, which contains a two-thirds black enrollment. Washington has promised to revitalize black and Latino urban neighborhoods, expand public health care, and to reorganize the racist police force. Any attempt to carry out any significant part of this program will generate the intense opposition of many white ethnics, the corporations and banks, leaders in both the Democratic and Republican parties, and a significant share of black and Latino sycophants who have been "bought out" by the machine.

Unlike other black liberal mayors, he cannot look to a sizeable black electoral majority to put him automatically back into office in 1987. His clearly social-democratic

and antiracist program places him slightly to the left of almost every mayor of any American city—with the exception of Berkeley's Gus Newport. Washington can expect a series of attacks from the Right; police slowdowns and strikes, harassment from the banks, corporate flight, political opposition from the state legislature and the Democratic machine, etc. All Harold Washington has actually accomplished to date is the forging of a black "electoral front," combined with white and Latino leftists and a smattering of liberals. The key here is for progressives to continue the mobilization of working class, national minority and poor constituents, in the streets as well as beyond the next election. The progressive momentum which carried Washington to victory, although occurring inside the Democratic primary, was in essence against the racist and pro-capitalist hegemony of both major parties over the lives of black people. If this popular mobilization falters in any way, or if Washington's key advisors attempt to move the administration to the right to accommodate the interests of the corporate status quo or the machine, then the campaign for radical reform and social justice will fail. This is the challenge and the promise of Harold Washington's recent victory.

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