

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Profit motive denies medical care

The conscience of the nation is said to be measured by its treatment of its young and old. The fact that this country falls far short is most evident in the area of medical care.

A seven-month-old baby in Eugene was nearly denied the right to life because his foster parents could not provide \$60,000. The baby requires a liver transplant to live.

The State Adult and Family Services Division first denied funds for the operation because it is still considered experimental, then decided to fund it.

The tragedy here is not just that AFS would quibble about funding an operation needed to sustain life, or that it would be forced to quibble out of consideration for priorities of need. The

real tragedy is that such an enormous price tag could be put on essential health care.

Money makes the difference between life and death. Thousands of people in the country die because they just do not have the money to pay. The exciting new discoveries of science are not used to heal but to make money.

Daily on the news we hear of parents and communities attempting to raise thousands of dollars for operations and other health care for children while the medical industry holds out for higher prices and greater profits. The inventors of the artificial heart are already looking for enormous profits at \$15,000 a hit.

In a nation as rich as ours, health care should be the right of every individual and no one should suffer or die because of lack of resources.

Return MHRC budget, programs

Commissioner Margaret Strachan attempted to justify her handling of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission at a meeting with MHRC Commissioners last week, but failed miserably.

Her pleas that she is committed to civil and human rights will fall on deaf ears as she tries to explain how stripping MHRC of its staff and programs can strengthen it.

Strachan's public position is that she wants MHRC's role to be advocacy. If she were even minimally aware of MHRC's activities since she has been on the City Council, she would realize that MHRC is heavily involved in advocacy—and in research, conciliation, mediation, education, etc.

Strachan's personal agenda originally appeared to be an effort to control MHRC, which is independent of City control although funded by the City and the County. The role of the Council liaison is to be a liaison, not a director. Failing in her efforts to control, Strachan appears to have the total destruction

of MHRC in mind.

She slipped a suggestion into her Tuesday speech to MHRC, the idea of making MHRC a private non-profit agency that would receive City and County funds. Whether this is a smokescreen or a valid suggestion, it is dangerous and should be vigorously opposed.

Although MHRC is a district City/County commission and has the independence needed to monitor City and County efforts at equal justice, employment, etc., it still has the authority and integrity of government. It carries far more weight than any private non-profit group could. Also, next year the City could decide it has other priorities and the private non-profit corporation could be left without funds.

MHRC must retain its official standing and must regain its total budget and programs. It plays an important role in Multnomah County and the City of Portland and should be strengthened, not destroyed.



Ronnie's role

The Democrats could learn a few choice phrases from Cuba's newspaper, *Granma*. Responding to Ronald Reagan's blatant lies about Cuba in a speech in Miami last week, the *Granma* said the speech "moves one to think that some of Ronald Reagan's speechwriters insist on giving the mediocre actor his most ridiculous role as a discredited and mentally dense President of the United States . . ."

"Morally speaking, Reagan is not even comparable to the bandits he killed in his cowboy pictures."

The Williamsburg Summit: U.S. against the world

by William Pomeroy

Judging by the heavy skirmishing and exchanges of fire that have been occurring between the leading Western powers as their annual summit meeting on economic problems nears, the gathering of heads of government that begins on May 28 at Williamsburg, Virginia, could resemble more of a policy shoot-out than a cooperative meeting of allies.

Not for the first, the battle lines have been drawn between the U.S. and the other six countries (Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and Japan) that set up the economic summit arrangement seven years ago as one means of trying to cope with the capitalist system's economic crisis. As the crisis has deepened, each successive meeting has reflected the intensifying rivalry among partici-

pants, especially the three main centers of the U.S., Western Europe and Japan.

All of the principal Western powers, faced by shrunken domestic markets made worse by very high unemployment and by cuts in government spending that undermine purchasing power, have set goals of maximizing exports.

The consequent growing trade rivalry is featured by protectionist measures, export subsidizing, and currency manipulation, designed to give each others' exports a competitive edge while curtailing imports from "allies." Past summit meetings have failed to heal the widening breaches in the capitalist alliance over these issues.

Into this situation, the Reagan Administration, obsessed with its desire to wreck the Soviet economy has thrown the aggravating issue of

halting East-West trade. This has fallen like disaster among the allies of the U.S., which see in trade with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries a major and welcome form of relief for their depression-ridden industries.

Last year's summit at Versailles was overshadowed by the row over the Reagan attempt to force Western European countries to cancel agreement to buy Soviet natural gas and to compel Western companies not to provide equipment on a large scale for the building of the Soviet pipe-line to convey the gas from Siberia. The other summit countries refused to submit to the Reagan demands, defied the Reagan sanction moves, and inflicted a major foreign policy reverse on the U.S.

The preliminary sounds of battle that have been preceding this year's

Political prisoner: The case of Summers

by Dr. Manning Marable
"From the Grassroots"

One clear indication that the U.S. government is escalating its forces of repression is the growing number of political-inspired trials of black dissidents.

Examine the case of black political activist Darnell Summers. In 1968, the Michigan State Police Special Intelligence Unit began surveillance of Detroit's Malcolm X Cultural Center, then directed by Summers. The day after a state patrolman, Robert Gonser, was murdered, the state decided to pin the slaying on Summers. Policemen went into the Center, destroyed property, and seized membership lists and telephone bills. Illegally wiretapping Summers' associates, they were ultimately unable to secure sufficient evidence to put the black activist away.

In the early 1970s, Summers became part of a progressive political group in West Germany, "Fightback," and initiated a small band, "Afrodesia." U.S. agents not only were sent into Fightback to disrupt the organization, but even threatened U.S. army personnel who attended Afrodesia's concerts. Summers' new associates, his ex-wife, and even his landlord were victims of intimidation. Finally, after fourteen years of harassment, the U.S. government has extradited Summers from Germany to stand

trial for the first degree murder of Gonser.

The state's evidence is admittedly shaky at best. One "witness," Gale Simmons, was also first charged with Gonser's killing, and at one time implicated herself. Summers declared that she had lied because of police coercion. Michigan Judge Joseph B. Sullivan dismissed the murder charges against Simmons on the grounds that the evidence was weak, and that a trial fourteen years after the fact was a blatant violation of any defendant's Constitutional rights to due process and a prompt trial. Yet this same judge now says that Summers must be tried for murder, and even denied defense motions to dismiss for violation of Summers' right to a quick trial!

This leaves Milford Scott, an unstable informant whose medical records classify him as a "sociopath." Scott at first claimed that Summers was involved in the murder. Yet as early as 1969, Scott also admitted to the prosecutor that his testimony was "nothing but lies" written by police agents. Even on the witness stand, police have stated that Scott "has told so many different versions that you couldn't trust him to say the same thing twice in the same day."

The criminal justice system has pulled out all stops to convict and

imprison Summers. Judge Sullivan has stated that "it would not be within the province of this Court to disqualify (Scott) and to strike his testimony because he, at one time, stated it was untrue." Judge Sullivan even denied the motion for trial transcripts to be paid by the state, even though the cost of thousands of dollars will make it difficult and even perhaps impossible for Summers to appeal his decision.

Why are the U.S. government and the State of Michigan going to such lengths to place Summers behind bars? He is a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, a militant left organization. But one does not have to be a communist, or a revolutionary, to take a stand for justice and civil rights. The tactics used against Summers are being repeated against many hundreds of black and white community leaders, trade unionists, and independent politicians every year. In this context, the trial of a Darnell Summers for a crime he did not commit illustrates the cynical manipulation of the law to subvert and to destroy the very basis of civil liberties and civil rights. For if a black revolutionary can be imprisoned on such ridiculous evidence, can the harassment and arrest of progressive religious, political and community figures be very far behind?

Quorum of One

by Greg Wasson

SALEM — Land use planning is the kind of issue that supports the advice never to discuss politics or religion with strangers. Government-mandated land planning requires a redefinition of the term independence and a rethinking of the sanctity of property lines. In the final analysis, if the state adopts meaningful guidelines, someone is going to be told to do something they don't like.

Three times in recent years, Oregon voters have said that's okay with them, rejecting efforts to repeal the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

Oregon is poised to enter the second phase of what Sen. L. B. Day (R-Salem) calls "a monumental effort to bring sensible planning to the entire state, not just the cities." Day, who headed the LCDC in its early days, says that as soon as the local governments adopt plans that accommodate state guidelines, the focus will return to the cities and counties.

But, there's the rub. Some local governments have shown themselves unable, or unwilling, to construct plans that pass state muster. Rep. Bill Bradbury (D-Longview), a representative from the South Coast, says the state needs to cut local government some slack and loosen the process up. He favors the approach contained in HB 2295 passed by the House last week.

That bill creates breathing room in the land planning process by introduction of the concept of substantial compliance, where, to quote the bill — "on the whole, the purposes of the goals have been met and any failure to meet the individual goal requirements is technical or minor in nature."

Is "technical or minor" specific enough language? Some think not.

The legislation is now property of the Senate, and Sen. John Kitzhaber (D-Roseburg) heads the committee slated to deal with the issue. While he agrees with Bradbury that the lawmakers need to modify the planning process, he approaches the task with a bit more caution.

"The trick is to construct that language tight enough so that, while you provide some discretion, you provide it within very carefully constructed parameters. I'm satisfied with the flexibility provided in the House bill but not the parameters that surround the concept and fence it in."

"I want to have something in there that says just because you're talking about a small area geographically, that doesn't by definition make it minor. A 10-acre shopping center in the middle of an exclusive farm zone would obviously be a major development even though it's only a small parcel of land."

Day, who serves on Kitzhaber's committee isn't impressed by the

concept of substantial compliance.

"That's a bunch of hooey. You can't be half-way there; you're either in compliance or you're not. The way to handle the situation is to allow an effective exceptions process that says, okay, there are some times when you can't follow the rules and if local government can show how the good outweighs the bad, deviations should be allowed on a case by case basis."

Actually, there seems to be little substantial difference between the concept of substantial compliance or an expanded exceptions process. Either approach amounts to a grant of significant latitude.

"I'd have to say that's true," agrees Kitzhaber, who allows that discretion is the quintessential double-edged sword. "The question is, who are you giving the discretion to?"

The answer? The LCDC. It's almost a given that this legislature will grant the commission broader flexibility in saying how close is close enough when it sits in judgment of local plans. The added discretion will create the possibility for backsliding and place more importance on who is governor and who he or she appoints to the commission.

Given the complexion of Oregon's present executive branch, that's a disquieting prospect to Oregonians committed to preserving the things that make Oregon special.

Williamsburg summit come chiefly from Western European and Japanese reactions to a crazily stubborn effort by the Reagan Administration to intensify rather than tone down its drive against East-West trade. Those reactions have a more determined sound than they had last year.

One of the decisions of the Versailles summit (more face-saving for Reagan than anything else) was to prepare special studies on East-West trade as a guide to policy-making. In a typical move, however, the U.S., without waiting for the studies to be finished, has rushed ahead with its own unilateral steps to wreck such trade.

Early in April, President Reagan sent to Congress a bill for renewing the U.S. Export Administration Act of 1979, which expires in September. Included in the new bill are provisions that would enable the U.S. to impose unilateral sanctions on foreign companies that sell goods to the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries, sales considered inimical to U.S. "national security."

The definition of "national security" would be drawn up by the U.S., not by the western summit, and

would fit the Reagan reasons for denying technology to the Soviet Union. The sanctions would be in a form of cutting imports for such companies. Also, the U.S. would assume the right to dictate to subsidiaries of U.S. multinational companies in foreign countries its anti-Soviet trade bans.

Francis Pym, the British foreign secretary, issued a rebuking statement hitting at the U.S. for endeavoring to apply extra-territorial control over trade with socialist countries. "There is a strong commercial interest shared on both sides of the Atlantic in ensuring that our trading system is kept open," said Pym. Also, "We feel our political interests are very much involved and we hope that they will be taken into account."

The former British foreign secretary, Lord Carrington, made a strong speech to the International

Institute of Strategic Studies in London. He said: "Indiscriminate sanctions against the Soviet Union are neither feasible nor desirable." Saying that Western countries should be "ready to do business with the Russians when it benefited both sides," Carrington asserted, "The notion that we should face the Russians down in a silent war of nerves, broken by bursts of megaphone diplomacy, is based on a misconception of our own values, of Soviet behavior, and of the anxious aspirations of our own peoples."

Reporting from EEC headquarters in Brussels on April 29, the *Guardian* correspondent wrote that, "Diplomats fear that further friction could trigger a serious, political crisis within the ranks of the leading industrial countries." The *Guardian* correspondent saw disaster threatening the summit. At Williamsburg, it will be the U.S. versus the world.

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Portland Observer

The Portland Observer (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exile Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

The Portland Observer was established in 1970.

Subscriptions: \$10.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.



283-2486

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