

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Is this really democracy?

The reality that the U.S. sponsored and financed elections in El Salvador were merely a propaganda ploy is becoming even more evident as Ronald Reagan hails them as proof that his policies are successful and that democracy is taking root in that war-torn country.

Prior to the elections, representatives of broad sectors of the country, including the Catholic Church, trade unions and other independent groups, said elections held under present conditions would offer no solution to the country's problems—control of the land and resources by a few powerful families.

The fact that the elections were really for the benefit of Ronald Reagan's own electoral plans was evident to most of the people of El Salvador.

Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Edward Moyer, said, "It will be necessary to send troops to El Salvador if the elections result in a state of chaos."

As could be projected, the March 25th election did result in chaos.

The political parties of El Salvador estimate that from 30 to 70 percent of the people were unable to vote because of mass confusion at the polls. In El Salvador it is against the law not to vote and this failure can result in death. "The Elections were a national scandal," a National Republican Alliance representative said; and the National Republican Alliance has called for an annulment of the vote.

A run-off election will pit Duarte, whose earlier administration allowed 65 assassinations per day, against Roberto d' Aubeisson, leader of the death squads and personally responsible for the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

But Ronald Reagan is happy and proclaiming the rebirth of Democracy! The seven months preceding the U.S. election in November are extremely dangerous. Whether or not Reagan sends U.S. troops to El Salvador depends entirely on the impact such an invasion will have on his re-election. The plan, as revealed by the FMLN-FDR, is for Duarte, if elected, to call for direct U.S. military aid.

The military situation in El Salvador is worsening, with the government crumbling and the army becoming unwilling to fight.

The question of military intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua is not if, but when. If Reagan sees that intervention will harm his re-election chances, he will try to wait until after November 6th. If he believes the American people will accept intervention, as they did in Grenada, he will not wait.

It is imperative that the American people let Reagan know that they do not intend to allow thousands of young men to die in Central America and billions of dollars to be wasted in war. And they need to remove him from office November 6th: for if he is re-elected, this country will find itself in a long and bloody war that can only end in disaster for the nation.



Letters to the Editor

To the editor:

I was saddened to read about the resignation of Gloria Fisher, in the last issue of the *Portland Observer*. Gloria's style of reporting and

The *Observer* welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters should be short, and must contain the writer's name and address (addresses are not printed). The *Observer* reserves the right to edit for length.

writing were both informative and refreshing.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Gloria as a friend and as a reporter for over five years. She will be greatly missed by all who have had the opportunity to know and work with her.

I wish her well for the future and with her new career, and hope she will keep us posted on her endeavors through the *Observer*.

We will miss Gloria, but we hope that she will take with her fond memories of us, as we have of her. Good luck to Gloria Fisher, we will miss you as a reporter, but most of all as a friend. We will not forget you.

Karen Masterson
President
Beaumont-Wilshire
Neighborhood Association

Portland Observer



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Washington hot line

by Congressman Ron Wyden

In less than four months, a system of phone rates is scheduled to go into effect that could cost Oregon businesses an arm and a leg. In fact, it could cost them their business.

It's called "measured service." In short, that means making Oregon businesses pay for local service the same way they now pay for long distance service—based on the number of calls, length of calls, time of day, and other related factors.

There are a number of problems with this proposal. Number one, it represents a 180-degree turn in the way we've charged business for local phone service for the past 30 years. But the worst thing about measured service is that it is being rushed into use with little or no consideration of what it will do to businesses.

Representatives of Pacific North-

west Bell have been quoted as saying that 60 percent of the businesses—those who make a smaller number of local calls—would benefit from the proposed change.

But, even if we accept that analysis, in my book, that still adds up to 40 percent of the businesses who don't benefit—who lose under the plan—and I have to ask if that's good policy.

Do we really want to write off the economic good health of 40 percent of our small businesses?

And measured service won't be easy on municipalities either. The City of Portland estimates that it could cost them an additional \$600,000 a year if the new rates go into effect.

That is why I and representatives of a wide range of Oregon

businesses including realtors, insurance companies, retail merchandisers and the National Federation of Independent Businesses have requested that the state Public Utility Commissioner delay implementing local measured phone service for another year.

I think this delay is necessary to ensure that the measured service proposal is economically sound—and, if it is determined to be sound, to allow business time to plan for it.

It would also be consistent with what the Washington Legislature has done in a similar case. That body recently deferred implementation of a similar plan for the same amount of time. For the Oregon PUC to do likewise would, in my opinion, be in the best interest of Oregonians.

Longshore union challenges cuts

(Continued from page 1, column 4) trying to undo the protections written into the contract.

One of the PMA's tools against the contract protections have been the use of a Coast arbitrator, who over the years has made decisions affecting every aspect of the contract provisions.

Over the past years the phrase "PGP abuses" came into use, setting the arbitrator up as the judge and jury against workers accused by the employers of cheating on the guarantee.

The arbitrator has aided the employers' drive to reduce the longshore workforce by arbitrarily interpreting the contract—sometimes in favor of the union, but usually in favor of the employer.

Industrywide manning scales have been eroded. For example, in San Francisco-Oakland gangs working steel ships have been reduced to four, while in the Los Angeles-Wilmington port the gangs remain at the original six. The employers have managed to gain the right to "flexibility" in manning scales. In

the Northwest ports they want to cut grain operating gangs from five to one man.

There is little argument among longshoremen that the employers have consistently violated the contract while rejecting the union's complaints. Even when the union takes the violations to the arbitrator, at great expense, the companies merely have to make up lost pay if they lose with no penalty.

When the union confronts violations—often jurisdictional or manning—with job actions, they are faced with injunctions, fines and forced to go to the arbitrator.

Due to containerization, the packing and unpacking of cargo has been moved away from the docks, cutting deeper into longshorework. On the East Coast, the Intl. Longshoremen's Assn. has won jurisdictional rights in a 50 mile radius from a port. A similar agreement on the West Coast has been lost in the maze of the Reagan-controlled Labor Relations Board.

In the era of Reagan, the question has arisen as to whether this contract should hold the line, and main-

tain the status quo for a long term agreement—five year contracts have been negotiated in the past—or whether to go for a one- or two-year contract to see what will happen to the economy and the 1984 election.

"There is no longer safety in a long contract," one longtime longshore worker remarked. "With the history of contract violations by the employers, bad decisions by the arbitrator, and the continued erosion of jobs, locking ourselves into a long term agreement could find us coming out after four or five years too weak to protect ourselves."

The longshore division of the ILWU has long been noted for its support of other workers—through local union assessments and active strike support. Working people, both organized and unorganized, look to the ILWU longshoremen for their example as to what can be won for workers everywhere.

More than just the shipping companies are watching to see what direction the longshoremen turn in this crucial year of contract negotiations and national elections.

Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

Our question this week is, "What issues would you like the 1984 presidential candidates to address?"



William Green
Laid Off

"Giving Blacks—both male and female—more jobs and equal opportunity."



Bettie Montgomery
Retired

"All of them lie. Everything is a promise until they get in. I would like to see them live up to their promise."



Tom Espinoza
Cabinet Maker

"More job development. I'm getting tired of hearing about people out of work."



Michele Albright
Bartender

"Jobs. There is too much unemployment. Something might happen if they were to talk about it."



Johnnie Morris
Dispatcher

"A program for the people on welfare. Get people into a training program and stop cutting social programs."



Arlene Pickard
Consultant

"Balancing the budget and financial issues. Budget cuts so our taxes won't increase."