

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Stevenson inquest "contract"

by Jerry Garner

The recent decision by a Multnomah County Grand Jury not to prosecute any of the four policemen involved in the death of Lloyd D. Stevenson was the result of contracting between the District Attorney's office and the police bureau. "Contracting" is the negotiation of an agreement for the exchange of performance in the future. Police departments often contract with prosecutors to forego prosecution of police misconduct in exchange for a supply of police investigative resources to be used at the discretion of the prosecutor.

In the past, Michael Schrunk, Multnomah County District Attorney, has proven his reluctance to indict police on criminal charges. When he was forced to file charges against officers involved in criminal behaviors, he chose to proceed on less than the highest charge supported by the evidence. For example, in 1981, a criminal spree by officers of the Special Investigation Division (SID) resulted in 59 drug cases being pardoned and the City of Portland paying thou-

sands of dollars to individuals who were damaged as a result of those criminal acts. Schrunk declined to indict any of the officers involved in the scandal. Instead of indicting the officers or presenting the evidence to a Grand Jury, Schrunk gave the officers immunity from the State prosecution. According to Schrunk, this was necessary in order to obtain information from the officers to obtain the pardon of the 59 cases by Governor Vic Atiyeh. Schrunk claimed that without cooperation of the suspected officers, his office would be unable to discover all cases infected by the SID officers' criminal acts. Not only did Schrunk give the officers State immunity his next move was to seek federal immunity for the officers.

Schrunk asked U.S. Attorney Sidney Lezak to request federal immunity for the officers. Each officer received federal immunity. One of the officers involved in the scandal, Neil Gearheart, was paid \$37,466 on a claim for disability from the City. Gearheart claimed that he suffered psychological problems from the

death of his former partner, David Crowther. Crowther was killed when he was involved in a raid on the Outsider Motorcycle Club which Gearheart had lied under oath to obtain a search warrant for. The officers had gone to the club house to plant drugs.

The lack of action on Schrunk's part to press for indictments of the officers in the SID episodes was the beginning of contracting between Schrunk's office and the police. The case of Lloyd D. Stevenson was a classic example of contracting. Historically, when Blacks were killed by the police, prosecution seldom occurred. This is due to racism and contracting. There was more than sufficient evidence in the Stevenson case to warrant a Grand Jury indictment. However, the reason why an indictment was not handed down by the Grand Jury was due to Schrunk's office lack of pursuit for one. Michael Schrunk preferred to keep his contract with the police rather than to bring to justice the officers responsible for the homicide of Lloyd D. Stevenson.

## Israel-CIA alliance probed

By Robert Lothian

Israel does some of the dirty work the U.S. is unwilling to do and does it better, according to an expert on Israeli foreign policy who spoke in Portland recently.

Jane Hunter, founder and editor of the research journal, *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, addressed a meeting sponsored by the General Union of Palestinian Students and the Palestine Solidarity Committee.

Hunter was introduced as "a progressive Jewish woman from Berkeley." Her research exposes Israel's support of repressive regimes in Africa, Central America and the Middle East.

Supporting counter-insurgency operations conducted by these regimes with intelligence, advisers and military hardware, "Israel runs things better than the CIA," according to Hunter.

The direct and brutal military solutions of the "Israeli model" are more appealing to armies in South Africa, El Salvador and Guatemala than U.S. methods, which are perceived as having failed in Vietnam, she said.

While pursuing its own ends, namely to make a lot of money from selling arms (Israel's main industry), Israel also acts as a spearhead of U.S. policy. In return, the U.S. props up Israel's problem-ridden economy, Hunter said.

Israeli military assistance to South

Africa adds up to about \$1 billion annually, according to Hunter. "A lot of it is for continuing apartheid," she said.

A recent article in *Israeli Foreign Affairs* states, "Israel has passed on to South Africa all the relevant — i.e., everything bearing on the African National Congress and other indigenous opponents of the apartheid regime as well as South Africa's neighbors — information gathered from its connections in African capitals and from its infiltration of and actions against the Palestine Liberation Organization."

Another article states that the South African Army named an exercise in Namibia "Iron Fist" — the name used by the Israelis for recent military operations in Southern Lebanon. Israel supported South Africa's 1975 invasion of Angola, and its incursions into Rhodesia, Mozambique and Namibia, according to Hunter.

Israeli is also extending its influence to Zaire, Liberia, Togo, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Zaire's leader, Mobutu, "the most corrupt man in Africa," according to Hunter, has long had close ties to Israel and the CIA, she said.

In Central America, Israel and Nicaragua's Somoza dictatorship had a cozy relationship dating to the 30s. When Anastasio Somoza couldn't get help anywhere else in his last days, it was Israel that pulled through with vast amounts of armaments for his bloody last stand, said Hunter.

"Israel is now on the brink of taking over the contras," she said. Israel's support of the contras already includes uniforms, weapons and advisers, she said, but the support could mushroom with the recent U.S. aid cutoff.

Israel has been the main supplier of weapons to Guatemala since the U.S. cut off military aid under Carter, including the weapons used to massacre Indians in the highlands. "Computerized death squads" have been set up with Israeli help and model villages said to resemble kibbutz' are really concentration camps, she said.

The Guatemalan and El Salvadoran armies are adopting techniques perfected by the Israelis in their war against Palestinians, and Israeli involvement in Central America holds out the prospect of the kind of massive violence there that characterized the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, according to Hunter.

Hunter said her aim is to generate international criticism of Israeli policy and build pressure in Congress to cut U.S. support for Israel.

"The U.S., at least theoretically, could make Israel stop doing these things," she said.

It's an uphill battle, she said, because a strong Israeli lobby extends into the executive branch and dictates U.S. Mid-East policy. The Israeli lobby also keeps critical information out of the media, she said.



## Black infant death rate high

Along the Color Line by Dr. Manning Marable

Nothing is more painful than the death of a child. The loss of an infant creates an unhealable wound for the parents and their families. Black America knows this pain all too well.

Four years ago, the Federal government declared that it would enact measures to reduce the death rates of Black infants to 12 per 1,000 live births by 1990, close to the current white infant mortality rate of 10.1. This spring, Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler admitted that it was highly "doubtful" that this goal would be reached. In 1982, the Black infant mortality rate stood at 19.6 per 1,000, and any optimism about lowering this figure to 13 to 14 for each 1,000 by 1990 is at best slim.

In an international context, the high infant mortality rate among Afro-Americans seems difficult to explain. According to "Health United States, 1984," a publication of the National Center for Health Statistics, many nations "have considerably lower infant mortality rates than the United States." Japan, Sweden, and France all have "rates less than 10 deaths for each 1,000 live births." About 40,000 U.S. infants die in the first 12 months of life each year. And 6.8 percent of all U.S. babies, plus 12.4 percent of Black infants, are born at "low weight," under 5 pounds, 6 ounces.

Research in this field has accelerated in recent years. Last month, the

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development awarded Howard University a grant of \$2.5 million to hold a 5 year study on Black infant mortality. In the District of Columbia, Black rates are higher than the national Black average — about 21.2 per 1,000 as of 1982. According to Howard University professor Allan Johnson, the new study's principal investigator, "high infant mortality rates among Blacks" are directly tied to "inadequate health care, poor diet and a high incidence of adolescent pregnancy." Poor prenatal diets and health habits may also have an impact on "the intellectual development" of Black children.

Some conservatives suggest that one effective method in lowering infant mortality rates would be in checking the rise of teenage births. Infant mortality rates are especially high among young women below age 19, and as of 1983 nearly 10 percent of all U.S. teenage females had babies born out of wedlock. The conservatives suggest that a renaissance of orthodox family values, patriarchy, and sexual ignorance would cut teen promiscuity, and hence reduce infants' deaths.

This thesis misses the point at many levels. Teenage birth rates are high, in part, because of repressive government legislation which discriminates against Blacks and low income people. If a teenager from a family on Medicaid becomes pregnant, she must present her family's Medicaid

card to receive free care or hospitalization. And in all but 14 states, Medicaid doesn't pay for abortions.

European countries with lower teen birthrates have extensive sex education courses in their public schools. U.S. conservatives who shed crocodile tears for Black infant deaths nevertheless oppose sex and family instruction in the classrooms as detrimental to patriarchal values. Cold showers and sexually repressive instruction will neither halt the rise in out-of-wedlock births — nor will they cut into the infant mortality rates.

Perhaps the cruelest dimension of Reaganism is its contempt for human life. Conservatives will carry banners and even bomb abortion clinics to ensure the life of a fetus, yet once a child comes into the world, he/she is left to survive by its wits. Cuts in food stamps, Medicaid, public housing, and the Women, Infants and Children Program all have a destructive effect upon the Black community. Permanently high unemployment rates foster poor diets for many pregnant women. We cannot begin to make up for the thousands of infants who have died because of the callous disregard the political right has for public health care. To reduce Black infant mortality rates, political solutions are essential.

Dr. Manning Marable teaches political sociology at Colgate University, Hamilton, New York. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

## Letters to the Editor

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be typed or neatly printed and signed with the author's name and address (addresses are not published). We reserve the right to edit for length. Mail to: Portland Observer, P. O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

### City "circus"

To the Editor,

Another "sister city?" Do you really believe it will not eventually cost you anything? That's like the old story about "special" taxes that were going to be dropped later, and "later" never came.

Darrell Briden was basically ignored because everyone was enjoying themselves, bubbling with their own good and expansive feelings. After all, what could it hurt, helping these poor people? The communists wouldn't think of using our school supplies to teach their brand of "democracy."

What about Oregon's poor? What about Oregon's prison education sys-

tem, where some outside help might help cut your tax dollar — and save some young adult from the prison/welfare cycle. What about Burnside and N.E. Portland, where people beg for help, and find little or none from "helpful" organizations.

Mildred Schwab is right in using the word "circus." Before it fell, Rome lived on circuses. No one seems to read history, anymore.

Not a handout, but a hand-up!

WALTER SUTTON

### Writer objects to deleted word

To the Editor,

A "letter to the editor" written by me appeared in the May 22 *Observer*, concerning my opinions of the Stevenson case. In the first sentence of the second paragraph, the word "murder" was deleted from my letter and "death" substituted. I object very much to this altering of my letter.

The purpose of a "letter to the editor" section is for readers to submit their opinions on current topics that they would like the rest of the readership to consider, and I thank you for printing my letter. The letter I submitted, though, contained the word "murder" purposefully, because that is MY opinion regarding Lloyd Stevenson's death. By substituting "death" in my letter without my permission, you dramatically altered the tone of my letter. I do not like words I did not write (and would not have written) inserted in a letter over my name, as if I said it.

I ask either that you reprint my letter exactly as I submitted it, or that you place in the soonest available *Observer* editorial page an "apology" or "correction" box, explaining your error, and what I really said. I feel strongly as if my opinions have been altered after they left my mouth, and that is not right.

I ask that you contact me regarding your progress in this matter. I hope I will be able to engage your prompt cooperation in this matter, to set things right.

ROBERT HANSEN



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