

## Early Semesters:

### More Than A Schedule Change

by William E. Davis

(William E. Davis is chancellor of the Oregon State System of Higher Education.)



We've heard a lot in recent years about "zero-based budgeting." It is supposed to be better because it creates a budget from the ground up, rather than merely taking last year's budget and adding to it.

In Oregon, we will be adapting that idea to rebuilding the courses and curriculum of seven of our state-supported, four-year colleges and universities.

This will be a significant added benefit to a recent decision of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education to move its academic calendar from quarters to semesters.

In revising the calendar, and in reducing the number of courses by at least a third, every professor, every department and every campus will take a thorough look at what they are teaching and why.

It will be the first time this has been done, statewide, in the 55-year history of the Oregon State System of Higher Education.

The switch to the so-called "early semester system" is significant for other reasons, as well. It will improve the quality of education that our sons and daughters receive.

Under the new system, beginning fall 1990, first-semester classes will begin around Labor Day and conclude in mid-December. The second semester will begin in mid-January and run until mid-May. (With the existing calendar, classes begin in late September and end in mid-June.)

The benefits to students—both educational and financial—are numerous.

Consider:

- Quality of instruction will be strengthened because students will be exposed to courses longer—15 weeks instead of only 10 weeks. This means students, having more time for library research and writing projects, will learn in greater depth.

- Students will benefit from added instructional time resulting from the elimination of one cycle of class registrations, one "dead week" and one final-exam week.

- Campus administrative costs will be reduced because one registration cycle will be eliminated.

- Because students will enroll for two semesters rather than three terms, they will buy books only twice a year instead of three times. (Most college textbooks now are written for semester-long classes, so students in quarter classes typically are assigned only part of the book.)

- Students, by finishing classes in mid-May instead of mid-June, will have a better chance of finding summer jobs.

- Faculty members who now have as little as a week to prepare between terms, will have more time to plan and revise their courses.

- Oregon schools, whose calendar now conforms with only a quarter of the nation's colleges and universities, will join 54 percent of higher-education institutions enrolling 65 percent of U.S. students using the early-semester system.

The revised calendar will affect Oregon State University, Portland State University, the University of Oregon, the three regional colleges in Ashland, La Grande and Monmouth, and Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls; the only unaffected programs will be those at Portland's Oregon Health Sciences University that operate on a year-round schedule and the UO law school, which adopted early semesters in 1972.

In making the transition, we will work closely with faculty members and students on the campuses as well as with other interested groups statewide.

A number of Oregon community college presidents have told us they also favor the early-semester system. We will work not only with them, but also with public school officials to ensure that the change is as orderly as possible.

Even as we alter the academic calendar, we will continue to be sensitive to the needs of students who will benefit from taking some courses of shorter length.

For students, for taxpayers, and for quality education, the early-semester system will deliver benefits far beyond merely revising the academic calendar.

## Point and Counterpoint

by Betty Harris-Garner

Local community worker and educator, Betty Garner, writes a new column for Portland Observer readers. The column is to enlighten the community on various people, events, and opportunities that affect our city. This particular column is devoted to the

### "SAY NO TO DRUGS" Community Campaign

Local community residents and S.I.H.N.A. (Sabin/Irvington Heights Neighborhood Association) are joining hands on February 14, 1987 to "SAY NO TO DRUGS" by holding a Lipsing event. This event is spearheaded by Annette Petett. For more information about time and place for this event, call 287-9825.

Our community, within the last five years, has been faced with a dangerous inflection of undesirable habits. These habits have been handed down to our youth who will become the future of tomorrow. Our city, Portland, is now faced with a drug problem that has ventured into our neighborhoods and into our schools. It has come closer and closer to eliminating the good family background that Oregon was once known for.

Young adults have migrated to our City from California and have infected our youth with chocolate dreams, weapons, and general misconduct. Our police are aware of the situation, and they are doing the best they can to stay on top of the situation. It is a tremendous shock!

It is time that we all join hands and say "NO". Drugs and irreputable behavior must go. . . . If you know of anyone who is abusing themselves and/or attempting to get someone involved illegally, it is your duty as a citizen to get involved. Don't wait until it hits your home. Protect our city and youth. Call you local authorities immediately!

How did Annette Petett get involved with the local version of a Motown Lipsing Review? It's my understanding that she is coordinating the event.

Annette stated that she has always been involved with promoting the community. "My first adventure was the founding of the "Rose City Connection," from which I resigned in October, 1985. I started getting involved with my local neighborhood group (S.I.H.N.A.). I feel that the issues of drugs, education, etc., was more important. This is where I can prepare our youth for scholarship programs."

I understand that the Motown Lipsing event scheduled for February 14, 1987, is being hosted by two M.C.s. one of which is Patsy Baine Andrews. Can you tell me whether or not she is a professional model and does she have her own agency?

Patsy Andrew Baines is a professional model. In an interview with Patsy, she told me the following: "I started out modeling as a child at Lipman & Wolfe Co. in Portland, Oregon. This was through Gloria LaVonne Modeling Agency. From there I went to John Robert Powers for a more professional experience and won various national and international titles. Yes, I do have a modeling company. It's called "T. Bone Productions." You can contact Patsy through John Robert Powers Agency.

Marvin Mims and Loyce Tim are two contestants in the Lipsing Review. How did they each get started?

Loyce Tim, originally from Florida, will be imitating Aretha Franklin. She began her Lipsinging stardom at Geneva's, formerly a nightclub in Northeast Portland. Marvin Mims is going to portray Midnight Star. Mims, like Ms. Tim's, wants to be a singer. "The rave is Lipsing. I love to sing, so I decided to do what ever there is a demand for." Marvin is 21 years of age, so let's look for him in the near future. Good luck to both of you!

Next week: Community leaders . . . our readers are welcome to write in with a question. Make sure you send a self-addressed stamped envelope, should you wish a confidential reply.

## EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY

# Racism in "Amerika"

By Michael Simmons, Coordinator East-West Program

It is clear from the beginning that "Amerika" is anti-communist. ABC TV's new mini-series takes the complexities of East-West relations and reduces them to the simplicities of a shoot-'em-up western. "Amerika" is ultimately an ad for more nuclear arms and foreign intervention.

But if the anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism are clumsily overt, the racism of "Amerika" is more subtle—and disturbing.

While there are some obligatory Black characters, none of them play major roles. In some crowd scenes, there appear to be no people of color at all. No Third World woman appears in the mini-series. What happened to the rich diversity of peoples and cultures in our country? Perhaps only white people stayed on to mourn the fall of democracy?

The most deeply racist overtones appear in the depiction of the occupation forces, however. Instead of using her own boys, Mother Russia relies on surrogates for the dirty work of occupying and repressing the United States, notably Africans, Asians and Hispanics. These troops make up the "United Nations Special Service Units" which enforce the occupation under Soviet direction.

The viewer presumably is to assume that these troops come from Angola, Vietnam, Cuba, Nicaragua and other Soviet "client states." The implication is that these nations possess no autonomy and will jump at Soviet commands. This fits with the Reagan doctrine that Third World countries which oppose U.S. policy are simply pawns of the Soviet Union. (The obvious solution is aid to bogus "freedom fighters" in Nicaragua, Angola and Kampuchea.)

In "Amerika," the Russians are bad, but they're bad in a "civilized" way. The occupation army, on the other hand, shows no evidence of morality at all. In one scene in the script, the (white) sister of the hero describes being raped by several occupation soldiers—Black, Asian and Hispanic. "Amerika" reinforces the common stereotype that white women are in constant danger of rape by Third World men.

Another truly ludicrous aspect of the story is that the army of occupation is a United Nations force wearing

the U.N. insignia on its uniforms. This political assault on the United Nations is surely no accident. It is standard fare from the far Right to characterize the United Nations as a Soviet-dominated collection of insignificant Third World Nations out to "get" the United States and other good, white countries.

Now "Amerika" implies that the United Nations is actually a "fifth column" waiting to do the bidding of the Soviet Union in destroying the United States! This characterization of the United Nations is not simply anti-internationalist; it is also racist.

With African, Asian and Hispanic occupation troops repressing the good Americans, raping and attacking in (black) tanks and helicopters, the United States is depicted as a last bastion of democracy and, implicitly, of good, clean "white" values. The occupying forces become a metaphor for the waves of poor, Third World immigrants who come to the United States and "threaten" the American middle class. The non-white races which, in the racist's view, become communists and multiply outside of America's borders, now collaborate with the Soviets in order to revenge themselves on America's wealth and exclusive immigration policies.

Hitting our screens in a political atmosphere typified by cuts in programs for the poor, enormous increases in arms and military budgets, and the destabilization of governments in Angola and Nicaragua, "Amerika" advances the ideological agenda of the far Right. Of course it does so in a sugar-coated form; ABC insists this is "just entertainment."

All of this comes at a time when racist violence (such as that in Howard Beach and southwest Philadelphia) and racist paramilitary organizations are growing within the United States. "Amerika" neatly feeds this domestic racism.

At the same time, it also lends respectability to a world view which suggests that indigenous challenges to U.S. foreign policies in the Third World are all inspired and directed by Moscow, and hence are illegitimate.

"Amerika's" vision of both America and the world is thus fatally flawed and deeply racist. It is not "entertaining."

## Economic Liberty and the Constitution

by Barry N. Siegel

In a 1905 decision (Lochner v. New York), the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated a New York law that imposed a maximum 10 hour workday for workers in bakeries and confectionaries. The court's majority asserted that the law improperly invoked the state's police power (power to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the population) to deprive employees and employers of their right to enter freely into contract and in so doing violated the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which says that a state cannot "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law." By the 5th Amendment, the due process clause also applies to the U.S. Congress.

The majority opinion in Lochner has not survived. Since the mid 1930's the courts have approved state and federal legislation that restricts the economic liberties of individuals in a variety of ways. Such legislation includes, but is not limited to, enactments that regulate wages and prices, that limit working hours, that restrict entry into certain businesses and occupations, that prevent the sale of certain goods or service to foreigners, that prohibit foreign investments in certain countries, that force farmers to limit production, that restrict the use of real property, and that "take" the private property of some individuals in order to convey it to other individuals.

Challenges to such legislation have come to naught because the courts have interpreted generously the police power of the states and the constitutional power of Congress to regulate interstate and foreign commerce. In most instances, the courts will not substitute their judgement for that of a legislative body—it is enough for a state or local government simply to declare that a law is in the interest of the health and welfare of its citizens, or for Congress to assert that an activity affects interstate or foreign commerce, for the law to pass constitutional muster.

Government interferences with or deprivations of individual economic liberties are at odds with the notion of a free market economy. But modern courts have followed the lead of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in his dissent in the Lochner case when he declared that the Constitution was not intended to embody a particular economic theory, whether of paternalism and the organic relation of the individual to the state, or of laissez-faire. With due respect for the great Holmes, I beg to disagree.

British economic regulation of the colonies was in large measure the cause of the American revolution. Moreover, the Constitution was written in an intellectual atmosphere charged with the free market ideas of Adams Smith's "Wealth of Nations", published in 1776. The Constitution was designed to limit the government's power over the people and to avoid concentra-

tion of power by dispersing it over the Presidency, the Congress, and the Courts.

The provisions of the Constitution that bear most directly upon economic liberties are in Article 1, Section 9 and 10 that prohibit Congress and the states from passing ex post facto laws, in Article 1, Section 10 that prohibits states from passing any "law impairing the obligation of contract," in the Fourth Amendment, which limits governmental searches and seizures, in the due process clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, and in the Fifth Amendment, which explicitly prohibits government taking of private property for public use without just compensation.

First Amendment prohibitions against government abridging freedom of speech and the press, or of the right of people to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances, are as important for economic as for political freedoms. Taken together with the explicit references to property rights and with the general framework of government set forth in the Constitution, it is hard to believe that its writers had any other vision than a free society and free economy—in which individuals are free to associate, contract, and use their property lawfully within the framework of a limited government.

This libertarian vision has not been fulfilled. Legislators, backed by court decisions, have authorized massive intrusions into private economic affairs, and have deprived private individuals of their property and their freedom to contract. Documenting the process by which this state of affairs has come about would take far more space than is available here. The bottom line, however, is that we have in fact, but not in words, a far different Constitution than we had 200, 100, or even 50 years ago.

Regulation has by no means destroyed economic freedoms in the United States. Free and competitive markets exist in many products and services. The importance of such markets for our economic development is shown by the explosive growth of high-tech industries and the rapid expansion of air travel and financial services that has resulted from deregulation. Moreover, the spur of foreign competition is forcing many of our traditional industries to modernize.

The practical question facing the nation is whether government will use the powers it has been given by the courts to further impede our economic freedoms or, instead, to refrain from using those powers in order to continue with the process of deregulation that has begun under Presidents Carter and Reagan.

Siegel is professor of economics at the University of Oregon.

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