

PORTLAND OBSERVER

MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR FULL AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT.

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ALFRED LEE HENDERSON, Publisher/Editor

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The Editor's Desk

ALFRED LEE HENDERSON

Justice, Justice, Where are you?

When will the State of Oregon provide equal opportunity for its black citizens - and for its other minority citizens? In Oregon, equal employment is still only a few words on a piece of paper.

A quick scan of employment statistics for the State of Oregon shows a negligible number of black employees - yet the State of Oregon, which recently signed an affirmative action agreement - should be the leader, the example to the people of Oregon. An affirmative action agreement - which is a promise to seek out minority employers and to hire and promote at all levels - is supposed to designate action - a positive effort to attract minority workers. Yet most departments and agencies of the state have few if any black employees and certainly are making no effort to find them. Even the Bureau of Human Resources - which has the responsibility for social and human problems and programs - is doing next to nothing in this area.

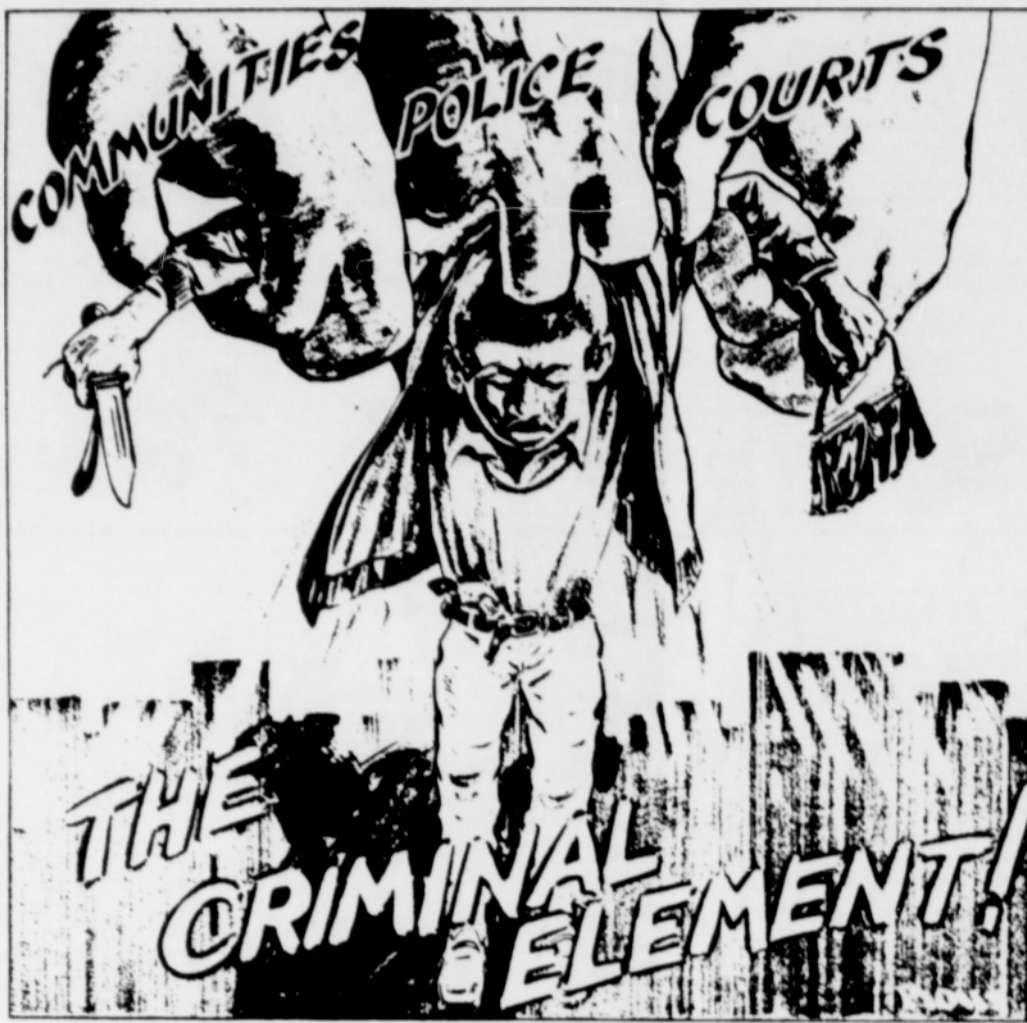
All state agencies and programs that use federal money - and this must be about all of them - are required by law to take affirmative steps to hire minorities. So we see that our state is breaking the law and is breaking its contract with the federal government. How can this be justified or excused?

Another need in the effort to bring equal justice to Oregon is the need for effective prosecution of the law. The Attorney General is the chief legal officer in the State of Oregon and he heads the Department of Justice. It is his responsibility to see that the civil rights laws of the state are obeyed. It is illegal in the State of Oregon for any employer to discriminate in hiring or in promotion or pay on the basis of race. When we scan the private employers in the state it is easy to see that many have all - white personnel. It is evident to us and should be to the Attorney General Lee Johnson, that an all white staff may indicate some element of bias on the part of the employer, especially when this happens in an area populated by minority persons. The Attorney General should be cognizant of the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as the federal District Court in Portland, has ruled that the absence of minorities implies discrimination.

We believe that the Attorney General should do more in this area than sit by and wait for a Black who has been denied a job to file a complaint, then recommend that the complainant drop his case, and then stall the matter as long as possible.

We believe the Attorney General and his staff should actively seek out and find areas of discrimination and take steps toward their elimination. We believe the powers of the state should be used to enforce this law just as forcefully as they are used to enforce other laws. Only when employers realize that justice comes sure and swift will many obey the law.

If there is to be justice for Blacks in the State of Oregon, it must come from leadership at the top of state government. It must come from the inspiration and influence of the Governor, of the elected officials and of the department heads. For why should the common citizen, the little businessman, the small employer obey the law when his leaders do not?



Its time for Blacks to do something about crime for our community

WASHINGTON BRIEFS

Congressman Charles Diggs has protested to General Motors and the Ford Motor Company their provisional decision to buy South African platinum for cleaning auto exhausts. The platinum industry, which is of considerable importance to South African economy, is on the decline and the Americas purchases will give it much needed boost. The mining companies are white owned, and exempt from "even the South African minimum wage" and practice color discrimination.

The Southern Poverty Law Center has filed a complaint charging the federal government with racial discrimination in hiring of federal employees in Alabama. In a state that is over 25 per cent black, fewer than 3 per cent of the 27,000 white collar workers of the agencies named are black. Investigations show that federal employment in Alabama reflects worse racial bias than state employment.

The Southern Poverty Law Center won a history making lawsuit earlier this year when it forced the previously all-white Alabama State Troopers to integrate and hire black troopers. Black troopers are now patrolling the roads of Alabama.

Representative Charles Rangel was re-elected by his Central Harlem district by a more than 60 to 1 vote. In the unprecedented 85 per cent voters turn out, 95 per cent of the vote went to Presidential candidate George McGovern. Rangel said the vote showed "a sophistication of Harlem voters and a recognition of the racism of the administration."

Caribbean leaders attending the Seventh Heads of Government Conference in Port of Spain, Trinidad, agreed to seek relations with Cuba and to form a Common Market. Another major advance in Caribbean economic integration was the adoption of wide ranging proposals for economic and industrial development. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Eric Williams prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

A Jackie Robinson Memorial Award honoring a black athlete making a significant contribution to the cause of racial justice, has been established by the Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, and will be given annually.

Diggs discusses home rule

As a result of the recent defeat of U.S. Representative John L. McMillan (D-S.C.) and the retirement of two other senior congressmen, Representative Charles C. Diggs, Jr. (D-Mich.) is expected to become head of the House District of Columbia Committee. When asked by newsmen about the likelihood of District self-government in the next session of Congress, Representative Diggs' "less than affirmative answer" caused some concern among "home rule" advocates. Focus went to the source for clarification:

Q: Because of your reluctance to endorse the Senate home rule bill for the District of Columbia, some people have doubts about your course as District Committee chairman. Could you clarify your intentions with regard to eventual District self-government?

D: I am no less committed to the whole concept of self-determination than I have ever been. There are many bills pending before the Congress designed to carry this out. The Senate bill is merely one of them. It is not a perfect proposal; it does not provide the kind of revenue resources that are absolutely necessary if we are to be about the very serious business of implementing control of the community by the local populace. In my view, it is one among many measures which would and could, in effect, mean home rule in name only.

Q: Some say that the House District Committee Chairman has more power than the

mayor of Washington. As chairman, will you be able to alleviate conditions giving rise to such unfortunate events as the uprising at the District jail, the teacher strike and other such calamities besetting the city lately?

D: I look upon my role as a partnership. I do not look upon it as a substitute for the mayor or for Congressman (Walter) Fauntroy, the District delegate, or for the city council or any other interests that are local in character. I think that we all have different roles to play. Obviously, being of the Congress, I represent the link between the federal interest and that of the local community; that link is the vehicle for transferring to the local people the required resources for viable self-determination. That transference of power to the majority or to a large minority does not mean a millennium. The most frustrated people in the country are black mayors presiding over problems transferred to them by the white power structure. Washington has the kind of resources -- both in the public and private sectors -- that can be brought to bear on many of these problems.

This is what I would be devoting myself to. And, I think as evidence of good faith, my intention to establish a new subcommittee on government reorganization should allay anyone's fears that I have retreated from my commitment to self-determination. This subcommittee will not only analyze for implementation purposes the recommendations of the Nelson Commission, but will go a step beyond that. The Nelson Commission was given the responsibility to analyze the efficiency of local government, but it did not specifically embrace the whole question of home rule.

Ancher Nelson (R-Minn.), chairman of the Commission on the Organization of the D.C. Government) refuses to embrace that responsibility. So this subcommittee will run tests in order to make a judgement as to the effectiveness of the transference of

power. It will not be like previous hearings, both before the Congress and out in the community, where people just engaged in conversation. I don't think that the recipients of testimony on the Hill thus far have really heard the meaning of self-determination as expressed by witnesses from the local community.

People have talked past one another. Members have sat and listened and some have not conceived of what self-determination actually is. Others in the community, and well-meaning people, really don't understand what we mean by the federal interest and the necessity for its preservation.

Q: "The federal interest" in the District -- would you elaborate?

D: Well, this needs to be defined. Washington was originally conceived as two cities. One would encompass the investment of the federal government in certain structures and facilities that were here for the conduct of the federal business and to accommodate visitors to the city. Secondly, the local community sort of grew up, I think, despite the plans of some people to keep this as a federal preserve. You cannot separate them. Every time the federal government sneezes, the local community gets economic pneumonia. When there are demonstrations, there are demands upon the local traffic facilities and police and other facilities. This is what I mean by the federal interest, and I do not believe that this Congress or the next Congress, if one can anticipate their character, is going to be willing to give up the entire investment of the federal government in this community.

Q: Does that mean that the federal interest will preclude any motions for statehood in the final analysis?

D: Well, I really don't know. I just make that general statement. The federal interest, for the foreseeable (Please turn to pg. 8, col. 1)

Letters to the Editor Analysis important

Thanks

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your endorsements, Primary and General election. As you know, the publicity given me helped to a great extent in my election. I look forward to a continued working relationship with you and the staff of the Portland Observer.

Sincerely yours,
Bill McCoy

Dear Editor:

I have enjoyed reading your past editorials on the political assessment of the elections in the State of Oregon. I have a feeling (even though it cannot be proven) that more white people read what you have to say than Black people. We as Black readers must not accept everything that is written. Hence it is necessary to have interpretive and analytical articles such as yours and other writers of your newspaper.

Blacks in Oregon must understand the implications of the elections, not only in Oregon, but all over the country. We as Black people can no longer sit back and let others (both Black and white) do our thinking for us. In other

words, we must think for ourselves. We must first, however, know the facts and one way to get the facts is by reading more!

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the three Black elected officials - Mercedes Delz, Aaron Brown and Bill McCoy.

You succinctly analyzed the situation and its meaning for Black people in the State of Oregon when you declared, "This election has brought a small ray of hope to the Black Community and perhaps the strength to fight on in this battle to achieve true representation in all the governments of Oregon."

Lenwood G. Davis

With Ron Hendren

A YOUNG VIEW OF WASHINGTON



KANGAROO TRAFFIC COURTS ON THE WAY OUT

WASHINGTON - Every year thousands of Americans driving out of their home states find themselves arrested by local constables for traffic violations, hauled before roadside justices of the peace, and sent on their ways thirty minutes later and \$25 poorer.

If you've never experienced the frustration of that scene, you are probably in the minority. Hundreds of miles from home and anxious to reach their destinations, the victims are faced with two poor alternatives - pay the fine (it's more like a ransom) guilty or not, or come back weeks later with your lawyer to fight a case that more likely than not may be stacked against you from the beginning. The latter is no alternative at all considering the expense and inconvenience involved, and of course, virtually everyone pays the fine.

But that modern-day brand of highway robbery appears to be on the way out, thanks to a Supreme Court decision last week which voided so-called "roadside justice" in Ohio. The court ruled that persons may not be tried by judges who double as mayors, and who are responsible for raising revenue for their villages with the fines they collect.

Noting that such jurists have a built-in "incentive to convict", the Court declared that defendants were thus deprived of their right to a fair trial. Similar court systems in 16 other states were called into question by the Court's ruling in the Ohio case.

But the time for cheering is not yet. Under the ruling, these mayor-judges will still be permitted to collect forfeitures and accept "free and voluntary" guilty pleas. So the incentive to pay and forfeit collateral is still present and the opportunity for using roadside courts in forced fund-raising has only slightly diminished. The court, in effect, has merely slapped the hands which have been reaching regularly into motorists' pocketbooks.

Indeed, the decision did not criticize or restrict in any way the almost universal practice of employing non-lawyers as justices of the peace or magistrates. These weekend judges often depend on convictions to supplement their income, and it is not an unheard of practice for the arresting officer and the convicting judge each to take their cut of the fine.

Such a system isn't justice. It's black-mail masquerading in the guise of a badge and a court docket. And one slap on the hand by the Supreme Court is not likely to be enough to stop a practice which is both entrenched and lucrative for all involved - except the victim.

Perhaps one solution might be to direct all funds collected as a result of traffic violations into the state's general fund, thereby removing the local incentive to convict unfairly.

It's something that should be considered. Corruption in traffic courts, small matter though it may seem to some, is but another direct and effective means of lessening Americans' waning faith in all levels of their government.

To Be Equal

by Vernon Jordan

Jackie Robinson was known as a "first" - the first black major league baseball player.

The successful career he forged with the old Brooklyn Dodgers made him one of the most popular ballplayers in history and brought a succession of pennants to his team.

It's hard to imagine that Jackie is gone from us, passing away at 53. It seems only yesterday when the Brooklyn Dodgers came to Atlanta to play the home-town Atlanta Crackers in an exhibition game. I was a young lad and Jackie was just starting his big-league career in Branch Rickey's experiment to see if America was mature enough to accept black men on the ball fields as equals.

Segregation was still in effect then, and the left-field bleachers were reserved for blacks only, while whites had the rest of the ballpark to themselves. Those bleachers were packed. Everyone wanted to see Jackie. He got on first base, and somehow made it to third.

Then came those great antics that kept people on the edge of their seats for the next ten years. He edged off third, scrambled down the baseline a bit, rattling the pitcher. He edged forward again, and then broke for home, sliding under the outstretched glove of the catcher to score. I still remember the thrill I felt then, and I guess I'll always remember it.

By his exploits on the field he taught a generation of young blacks that they too could climb to the top if they possessed the ability and the drive to succeed. And through his grace under fire, and his courage in the face of racist hostility by both players and fans, he demonstrated to all that inner integrity and confidence can shame bigotry into silence.

Jackie's success blazed the trail for other black athletes and made possible the present-day black dominance

of many professional sports. But the battle for equality in sports is still far from won. Studies have shown that the average black player still has to be better than the average white player to win a poston a team. Black players are still subjected to stricter rules and standards than are white athletes. And Jackie never lived to see the still-awaited first black manager of major league baseball team.

After his playing days were over he distinguished himself in politics, in business ventures and as an outspoken fighter against drugs and for civil rights.

When Branch Rickey decided that baseball couldn't be both racist and the national pastime at one and the same time, he looked long and hard for that unique black athlete who had the talent to become a great star and the inner strength to stand up to the pressures that were inevitable.

"I need a man who can fly the flag for his race," Rickey said. Robinson flew that flag, high and proud. Now we are in an era in which that flag must still be raised high, but the day of "firsts" is ended. We've already proved our worth many times over, and the vicarious satisfaction of another string of "firsts" won't do any more. Jackie was a pioneer and the days of pioneering have ended. What is needed now is recognition and equality all along the line, not just for the few who fought and clawed their way to the top.

It is instructive that on the same day that Jackie died, white parents in Brooklyn he helped make famous were keeping little black children out of the schools of their predominantly white neighborhood. We're still fighting the same battles Jackie fought, on different terrain. Like him, I am confident that we will persevere and win out in the end.

K

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