



WE SEE THE WORLD THROUGH BLACK EYES



EDITORIAL FOCUS

PDC Commissioners where are you?

The five Commissioners of the Portland Development Commission might be concerned citizens who are freely and with great personal sacrifice serving their community. They might be dedicated to the principals of citizen participation in the planning and development of the city. But they have shown little empathy with their neighbors in Albina who are being injured by their agency.

PDC is an agency that looks good on paper -- an agency that has done some good for some people. But in its great responsibility for removing some neighborhoods and restoring others, the responsibility to the individual is easily lost.

It is not enough to attend commission meetings and spend millions of dollars if there is no comprehension of the effect those millions have on the lives of the people in their path. With the huge responsibilities and the long range involvement PDC has in the area, the Commissioners -- Elaine Cogan, Dr. John Griffith, Mrs. Ogden Beeman, Dr. William Jenkins and Bob Walsh -- should be familiar figures in Albina.

We would like to see the Commissioners visit the homes and the neighborhoods of the people who "benefit" from their work. We suggest that they visit the homes that have been "rehabilitated" -- those who have received shoddy and incomplete work and those whose homes have been beautifully repaired. We suggest they visit those who have been denied grants without adequate explanation and those who have been insulted when they have asked why. We suggest they visit the homes of citizens who have been told they should take what they get and be satisfied because it's a "handout". We suggest they visit those who have lost their homes to Urban Renewal only to see new homes for the middle class rise in what was once their property.

The Commissioners are responsible for the poor work, for the threats, the harassment, the broken promises. They are responsible for the uncaring staff members. They are responsible for a Chief of Housing Rehabilitation who can write as late as 1971, "our legal staff feels that the use of the word 'minority' can be so loosely interpreted that it will be of little use to the contractors. Please give us the definition you use for this word." The Commissioners are responsible for the reputation of their agency, which has the responsibility and the opportunity to be of great service to the people of Albina and of Portland, but which is often used to oppress the poor and the defenseless.

The Commissioners are responsible -- and ultimately they will pay the price.

School Board could aid poor

The school district is acquiring land near the Memorial Coliseum for use as a warehouse and truck storage site. The school district has used condemnation, threat of condemnation and general harassment to acquire the property, which is largely occupied by family homes.

This is prime development property, located near the Coliseum, the freeways, the river and downtown. It has now been suggested, and is believed by many persons to have been the plan all along, that the property be sold to private developers for a motel and convention site. The school district has already agreed that some of the land should be sold.

This area was populated mainly by people who had lived there for many years. Many of the white residents had lived in their homes most of their lives. The Blacks bought homes there at a time when they were restricted to purchasing within the then narrow confines of Albina. Some had been displaced by the Coliseum. Now all are being forced out.

With the school district as the only authorized buyer and residents having to leave within specified time limits to obtain relocation assistance from PDC, property that is potentially some of the most valuable in Portland was purchased for as little as 60 cents a square foot.

Now the school district admits it has an ethical problem. After forcing people from their homes at great personal and financial loss, can it in good faith sell this property for private use? Is the school district in the business of property speculation?

There is an answer to this serious problem. Let the definition you use for this word. "The Community Development Corporation, providing technical assistance and obtaining funding. Then return the property to the corporation and let it develop the area. The property could be used for motels, a convention site, parks, housing or whatever is determined to be the best and most lucrative use. The ownership and profits would remain with the people who originally owned the property."

Such a project, owned substantially by Blacks and low-income persons, could be a national example of how federal and local agencies can assist the redevelopment of an area in a way that would benefit the homeowners. It would provide training and employment, as well as a substantial flow of money into the Black community. The possibilities are practically endless.

The school district has reaped the benefits of programs for the "disadvantaged". Now let it use its resources and expertise to find a way of redeeming some benefits from the chaos it has created.

Backfire possible

Vice President Agnew is reported to be on the verge of resigning due to his reported involvement in "payoffs" in his home state of Maryland. If the growing evidence of Agnew's guilt is to be accepted, it is best that Mr. Agnew resign. The American people should have the assurance that their highest elected officials are not involved in criminal activity. For those who are concerned with human rights, the news seems too good to be true.

The counter-rumor is that President Nixon is pushing Agnew out of the administration. If this is true it is surely done entirely for selfish motives. However, this move could backfire on the President. An Agnew resignation could turn public opinion toward impeachment of the President, for one of the commonly heard arguments against removing President Nixon from office is the presence of the Vice President, "What if Agnew were President?"

The prospect of Agnew as president should not deter the American people from demanding the trial and removal of President Nixon from office if they feel the evidence against him justifies this. But fear of a President Agnew is understandable and maybe the removal of this roadblock will help speed up the wheels of justice.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CR Officer fails community

Dear Mr. Henderson:

I recently met with Mr. Jake Gather, Director of Civil Rights, Federal Highway Commission, from Washington, D.C. and several State Highway officials, including Ellis Casson, Civil Rights Officer of the Federal Highway Administration, Region 10, which includes Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska.

The meeting was concerning the problems that Albina Contractors Association has encountered recently with the State Highway Division in an attempt to secure contracting work, training assistance and Construction Technology scholarships for minority youth and contractors throughout the state. The ACA is also trying to assure that the Highway Department complies with the Affirmative Action laws for minorities.

Contractors on federally-funded highway projects in Oregon are not in compliance with affirmative action requirements. For example, no more than a half dozen Blacks are employed on the highway construction between Portland and Salem.

It became apparent prior to this meeting that Mr. Casson either has no knowledge of the Affirmative Action laws or lacks the initiative and competency to enforce them.

It is really shameful and disgusting that such organizations as the United Minority Workers and Albina Contractors Association, dedicated to the causes of our people, are forced to seek assistance from Washington, D.C. in order to get a response to a problem which should have been solved by a regional representative, like Mr. Casson. I have at-

tempted to meet with Mr. Casson over a period of several months, with no response from him.

However, I guess we tend to forget that many of our "so-called" leaders are placed in various positions as "tokens" and not only do they fail to respond to the needs of our people, but also turn their heads and attention away from our cries.

I wonder just what it will take to make them listen and become responsible and effective Black leaders? Or, if that is not possible, what recourses should be taken to remove them from such strategic positions so that they may be replaced by conscientious, dedicated minority individuals?

Aside from his federal position, Casson is President of the local NAACP. In the past the Portland Branch has been in the forefront of the fight for equal employment opportunity, but the membership should look at the record of its current administration and see what its president has done for the community.

And you can talk to Black students who attended Roosevelt, Lincoln and Jefferson during Casson's employment with the school district, or for that matter, with many of the Black teachers, and learn that Casson did nothing to assist them.

The time for action is now, and we can no longer afford to carry the burden of both our poor and our disadvantaged, as well as our "Uncle Tom" leaders -- our backs just aren't strong enough!

I would be the first to praise the efforts of the government in hiring qualified Blacks and minorities in top positions, but it seems insulting and degrading to think that an individual in

one of the Highway Department's highest positions on civil rights has no better qualifications than a degree in religious education and a track record of incompetency. I'm sure we could do better than that for the benefit of the Civil Rights Division of the Highway Department and the state's minority population.

Sincerely,
Eugene Jackson,
Business Manager, Albina Contractors Association

YMCA

(Continued from p. 1 col. 7)

be scheduled for individual members but rather on a group basis. The staff and volunteers will go out into the community to locate and organize groups of youth and adults who may then participate in a variety of activities either within or outside of the YMCA building.

The new Metropolitan YMCA Urban Center will also serve as headquarters for a "day center" referral unit contracting with the courts and the Children's Services Division to provide supervised and structured programs for young people referred to the day center as an alternate to being placed in detention facilities. The day center purpose will be to help modify or eliminate conditions and factors which contribute to alienation, hostility and delinquency among youth.

Children with working parents especially need daytime care. UGN donations to daycare centers in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Clark Counties help provide this love and attention.

PMSC

(Continued from pg. 1, col. 4)

city in the Bureau of Human Resources. This plan was eventually put aside by the City Council and PMSC continues as a private agency.

Gilcrease was one of the strongest opponents of this plan. Although he agreed with the creation of the Bureau in concept, he had objections to some of the methods. Placing the OEO programs under the city would eliminate citizen control, he maintained. Currently PMSC is operated by a citizen board, and every program has a board made up of recipients of the program as well as other concerned citizens. He also was concerned that employees of PMSC and the programs would not be given civil service status with the city, but that many would be eliminated as other city employees needed their jobs. Many employees who have experience and training and perform their jobs well would not fit into civil service categories.

PMSC has a good relationship with the Bureau and Gilcrease works closely with Commissioner Schwab and Bureau director Ira Blalock.

One of Gilcrease's major concerns is with the fate of Black directors. With 49 Community Action Projects in the Northwest, he is the only Black director. The others have been eliminated or their programs terminated. Closer to home, some of the programs that had Black directors in Portland now have white directors, Charles Jordan has left Model Cities; Leon Harris resigned from the Multi-Service Center.

Although the study has not been released to the public, it indicates that the Nixon Administration is attempting to eliminate Black directors across the country.

This has been a year of crisis for PMSC, but Gilcrease believes in turning evil into good and adversity into strength. He looks forward to another difficult but rewarding year.



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Census undercount loses dollars

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

You might be one of the 5.3 million people the U.S. Census Bureau admits it did not count in the 1970 census. If so, that means that your neighborhood loses federal aid apportioned on a per-capita basis, including revenue sharing money, and shares less than it ought to in other federal and state programs.

Over five million people not counted may not seem much on a national basis in a total population of over 200 million, but it's impact on localities, especially on hard-pressed cities and towns with substantial minority populations, is important.

The bulk of the "missing persons" are minorities; almost eight percent are Black, as against less than a two percent undercount for whites. Spanish-speaking people were probably undercounted more than any other group, since the census forms were in English only.

How much have key cities lost because of the undercount? It's hard to say exactly, but a good estimate, based on the Census Bureau's own figures of the undercount, indicates that New York State lost about \$15.1 million in revenue sharing funds alone, while California lost almost as much.

Major cities lost large amounts that could be used to help relieve the crushing problems they face. New York City lost about \$6.7 million; Chicago, \$2.5 million; Washington, D.C. \$1.5 million, and other cities similar amounts depending on their size and their minority populations.

What ought to be done to rectify a mistake the Census Bureau admits occurred? After all, the census is no academic head-counting exercise; it is the basis not only for allocation of federal and state funds, but also for political representation and

the drawing of political districts at all levels of government.

The Census Bureau itself wants another census in 1975, instead of waiting until 1980 as mandated by the Constitution. There is a lot to be said for cutting the census interval from ten to five years in our highly mobile nation. There is an agricultural census every five years counting every farm animal and tractor in rural America. If we can count chickens every five years, why not people?

But Congress refused a mid-decade census so we must deal with these figures for the next ten years. I have already suggested an across-the-board increase in official population figures to account for the estimated undercount, but such suggestions have met with a defeatist response that simply says that the national figures can't be adjusted on a local basis.

Now the National Urban League's Research Department has come up with a formula it says can be applied to correct the undercount. The researchers went

to the Census Bureau's own estimated national undercounts of different sub-groups of the population and devised a system of adjusting local figures.

They make clear that this is an interim device to be used in the current emergency. Eventually, population researchers and the Bureau may come up with a fool-proof method of compensating for national undercounts; but until then, it makes sense to put the League's method to immediate use in all population-based formulas on federal and state aid.

After all, this wouldn't be the first time the government used nationwide figures to deal with localities. The famous poverty index, for example, applies a national definition of poverty regardless of the significant cost of living variations in different regions. The national poverty index is used as a national standard for allocating funds to localities; so too, the suggested revisions in population figures would be used as a standard for disbursement of funds until the next census.

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