



We see the world
through Black eyes

Police neglect at fault

Last week one man was killed and two were injured at a motorcycle swap meet at the Memorial Coliseum.

This tragedy raises many questions because it was predicted four months ago and because the police bureau was warned three weeks before the event that violence was certain to occur.

Last August members of the Brothers Free motorcycle club -- made up mainly of Black residents of the Albina area -- asked the police bureau to enforce the law. They told police officers and community members that the police seemed lax in enforcing the law where the Outsiders biker club was concerned -- that when bikes were parked on the sidewalk or when the traffic was impeded by bikers closing the street, police officers drove on by.

They also complained that threats against them and shots fired at community members in the vicinity of the Outsider's house -- allegedly by a person who was with Outsider members -- were not aggressively investigated by the police.

They further charged that police officers with whom they discussed their grievances against the Outsiders gave that information to the Outsiders. They asked that the police department enforce the law to the extent that they would be free to use the public streets.

Three weeks before the gathering at the Coliseum, the police were warned by the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission that violence would occur. Yet the police department saw no reason to provide police surveillance or protection at that site. Also, the Exposition Recreation Commission, which allowed the event to be held in spite of the well-known increasing tension between the two motorcycle clubs, failed to provide the usual guards.

Could such a lack of responsibility be accidental? It almost makes one wonder if the lack of police protection was planned -- like someone up there said, let 'em shoot each other up and get it over with. The whole affair -- as well as police response to the building tension -- needs a thorough investigation.

Charter needs changes

Citizens will soon be named to the Multnomah County Citizens Review Committee. This committee is to review the current county charter and make recommendations for positive change.

The Review Committee came about as a result of the passage of a referendum to eliminate charter amendments that had been passed at the last election. These amendments called for commission districts, two year terms, and other changes. The

South Africa's suicidal path

by Vernon Jordan

South Africa's die-hard rulers seem to be solidly committed to a path of self-destruction that could result in terrible blood-letting, both for themselves and the white minority they represent, and for the country's Black majority.

Justice a few weeks ago key government figures were making various noises of differing degrees of moderation. They were floating trial balloons about setting up a Swiss-like canton system that would share the country among the various racial and ethnic groups. There was talk of a federation between Blacks and whites. There were some vague signs that American and international pressures were leading to some sort of reconsideration of the vicious apartheid policy.

But then the government banned moderate groups, jailed and exiled key figures who spoke out on behalf of racial justice, and closed down the most important Black newspaper in the country.

Black editor Percy Qoboza was jailed. White editor Donald Woods was placed under South Africa's version of house arrest. Over 150 others were arrested.

The hollow excuse for these violations of human rights was that the organizations and individuals involved were stirring Black-white hatreds and confrontations.

That charge is a feeble cover story. The government moved not against Black leaders who had given up hope of peaceful change, but against Blacks and whites working to heal racial frictions. To wipe out the moderates and then accuse them of being extremists is the kind of vile action we've come to expect from South Africa's rulers.

The real reason for the repression probably lies in the Steve Biko case. Biko, a Black leader, died while in custody by South Africa's police. He's supposed to have starved after an eight-day hunger strike. No one bought that absurd story and reliable reports indicate he was beaten to death by the police.

So the repression serves the purpose of getting vocal advocates of change out of the way while warning the South African press that when the true story of Biko's murder finally comes out they should play it down.

South Africa's pretensions to being a democracy now stand revealed for what they are -- hollow claims. It used to say "we have a free press." With the bannings it can't say that any more. It points to the upcoming elections and says, "we have free elections." How free are elections in which the government is chosen by four million whites while eighteen million Blacks are denied the right to vote?

To the Administration's credit, the

elimination of these amendments and the return of the charter to its original form passed by less than 700 votes. Approximately 20 percent of the registered voters voted.

There is reason to believe that if this election had been held during the Primary Election, when a larger number of people vote, it would have been defeated. Whether that is the case or not, there are a great many people who are unhappy with the county charter.

There also are a great many others who believe the Review Committee will be a hoax and that it will not give serious consideration to change.

The citizens will watch this committee carefully.

Another Point of View It needs to be said

from the Milwaukee Courier

In the Black movement today, as has been the case throughout our history here in the good ol' U.S. of A., the most devastating and destructive enemy to the success of our liberation efforts is us ourselves -- more specifically, those "brothers" and "sisters" who have "sold out" to our oppressors and enslavers.

There are many types of selling out: conscious, unconscious, personal gain, fear, indecision, influence-persuasion and sympathy for the oppressor and his agents. We should know these various ways of betraying the struggle, not only to be able to know who is and who is not a traitor, but also to know what type of corrective action to take to eliminate this problem.

First, there are two broad categories of sell-outs: conscious and unconscious. Conscious sell-outs are those who know they are betraying the interest of our people. They are aware of what they are doing. Of these conscious sell-outs, two are most prominent -- the coward and the traitor. The coward is one who is aware of the need of struggle, of confrontation with our oppressors, but because of his fear of the consequences, he opts to turn his back on the struggle. He is afraid and he knows it. Most insidious, though, is the traitor. He, too, is aware. But, he sees that by betraying his people, he can get some kind of personal benefit for himself. So, due to his own lack of character, his greed, or his mental derangement, he willingly becomes that most hated and despised by all people -- A TRAITOR.

Unconscious sell-outs are numerous and varied. They basically are well-intentioned; they simply are unaware of the effects of their actions. They do not see the relationship between the actions and positions that they take and the betrayal of their people's interest. We all have at one time or another "sold out" in this sense.

United States spoke up swiftly to condemn the actions, but South Africa's Prime Minister in effect told us to mind our own business. He didn't worry about U.S. "meddling" when we backed the apartheid state, when American corporations were urged to invest in it, or when we supported its military establishment.

Our leadership has a duty to speak out against the rulers of the apartheid system because of our past complicity with it.

The strictest sanctions should be applied to South Africa so long as it continues on its present course, and they should be implemented both by the international community in recognition of South Africa's threat to peace, and by the international business community upon whose investments that country relies.

The important thing to remember about the jailings and bannings is that by moving against moderate forces for change the South African government creates a leadership vacuum that must be filled by less reasonable and less peaceably-inclined people.

Thus it moved to close off the possibility of peaceful change and to virtually guarantee armed confrontation. And it has moved itself further away from civilized behavior and from any claims on international respect for its sovereign rights.

Letters to the Editor

Guards - "Following orders from higher up"

To the Editor:

The most recent issue of *Esquire* has an enlightening article on doing time. The similarities common to all prisons -- the encouragement of racial strife, the guards involvement with a prisoner's mail (and thereby involvement with a prisoner's family and friends), the guard's grandstanding a man in a prison cell -- are mentioned. In reading the article -- an excellent look at the realities of prisons. I noticed there was no mention of the new phenomena among prison personnel -- the psychopath.

The guards who steal all they can were mentioned. But then it is such a common practice in jails and prisons for guards to steal from prisoners, it has almost reached the status of acceptable behavior. Whether it is a guard picking up a prisoner's personal property and pocketing a pack of butts, whether it is someone in the mail room pocketing a dozen stamps sent in for a prisoner, or whether it is "confiscating" a prisoner's radio and batteries in the name of maintaining "the good order and security" of the prison, it is theft -- no less than the theft done by men in here serving years for it. (The radio and batteries mentioned above, a total value of more than \$80.00, were taken from a man who is serving five years for stealing less than \$40.00.) There is no appeal. If such practices were challenged, the state would offer the same general excuses, as in the case of the state employee who saved himself a hundred dollars or more using prisoner labor to move: everyone does it -- or better, things like that have to be put in a perspective.

The guards' involvement with a prisoner's family and friends are legend. The few unsavory cases that happen to receive notice are quickly hushed up; the prisoners involved are often, as in the cases of favored informants, instantly rehabilitated and put outside on parole or a release program.

The guards' e' dat as they stand around one prisoner is well known to any man who has done time. I've seen five of them handcuff a man's hands behind his back. Two of them stood by with clubs to watch the prisoner, one stood by to watch the first two guards and give them assistance if they couldn't handle the situation, and the last two watched everybody else and each other. I'm sure hundreds of such scenes, and much worse than the one described, could be found everyday somewhere behind prison walls or in jail cells sealed off to public view. And I imagine every prisoner has his recollections of some similar scene of the brave guards.

I think it is important for someone to start writing the history of the new breed -- the psychopaths.

This type of guard can be exemplified by a recent case (Appellate Court number 9056) taken to the Oregon Court of Appeals. It's an involved case but it breaks down to a guard manipulating a prisoner's witnesses to give testimony against him and, in at least one case, falsifying the testimony of a witness. Even though the guard's own written statements prove the fact, even though he has been doing this for years, as in the case of guards stealing from prisoners, it has become almost acceptable behavior. There are numerous other examples; in

fact, a guard cannot advance to any high position unless he proves how tough he is on prisoners. Some prove their manhood by waking men up in the middle of the night, some prove it by manipulating prisoners against prisoners. (It's a sad fact, but some prisoners don't know whose side they are on.) There are several different methods used to prove a guard's fitness for advancement. But the psychopath, some of them educated in colleges, bring a new dimension to corrections: the old style physical degradation, even though it still flourishes, is being replaced or segmented with psychological degradation. The tools of the 1984 society are being honed and refined by the new breed of rehabilitators -- the guards who have no conscience and offer non-sense as sense.

The other day a group of guards came in for the weekly harassment of going through every cell. A prisoner asked how many sheets of writing paper were allowed in a cell at one time. A guard paused from reading through a prisoner's personal and legal letters and said, "Four or five." Then he quickly added, "The rules say four but we'd probably let it go if you have five." And that wasn't enough! He went on:

"We're just following orders from higher up."

That's all they were doing when they built Buchanan -- just following orders from higher up. Little by little the orders get crazier and crazier until one day they all went insane -- just following orders from higher up.

Donald Danford



Sample Messages

(from
Observer
staff
members...)

Santa,
Please send
me a scholar-
ship to Morris
Brown...SB

Santa,
Please send
me a car that
runs...RL

Santa,
I need a 10-
speed for this
summer...DM

"Yes, Ron,
There is a Santa --"
and he (or she)
is a special someone for
everyone...

This year the Observer
is offering
you a special way
to tell your special
Santa what you would
like for
Christmas...

In our Christmas
Personals Section --
12 words for 3 weeks
for \$3.

Your message will
appear for
3 weeks in December...
just fill out and mail
the blank below...

PLEASE PRINT MY MESSAGE TO SANTA,
DECEMBER 8, 15, 22 -- FOR \$3. (12-word
maximum, 15c for each additional word, weekly.
Messages must be received by Monday, Dec. 5,
after which regular rates will be charged.)

SANTA,

Name _____
Address _____

(Mail this entry to: Observer, P.O. Box 3137,
Port., OR. 97208)

(Please enclose check or money-order.)



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