



We see the world
through Black eyes

The people score again

Fair Share! Fair Share! Fair Share! Everywhere you go there's Fair Share!

This "grassroots" organization has proved once again that a united community effort can bring results.

Another success has been added to Fair Share's accomplishments. Along with new city attention to abandoned buildings and demolition of the dangerous playground at Unthank Park, there is now a new traffic light at Union and Failing. This light appeared less than two weeks after Fair Share confronted the proper city officials although the previous word was that it would take two months or more.

The older civil rights organizations and the politicians espousing "grass roots campaigns" and "citizen involvement" could learn a valuable lesson from this group.

Changes aid enforcement

President Carter has submitted a Civil Rights Enforcement Plan to Congress that should bring new life to the civil rights effort.

Although the laws have been on the books for many years, equal opportunity has been impeded by lack of enforcement on the agency level.

Civil Rights enforcement is now spread out under the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, the Department of Labor, the Department of Justice, the Civil Service Commission and the Equal Employment Coordinating Council. Eleven additional agencies have responsibilities for contract compliance enforcement.

This results in inconsistent standards, duplication, conflict and overlapping among agencies, and lack of accountability. On top of that, many of those persons responsible are hold-overs from the Nixon Administration, less than enthused over minority rights, but protected by the civil service system.

Carter's plan will abolish the Equal Employment Opportunities Coordinating Council and place its duties in the EEOC; transfer the authority to enforce the Equal Pay Act and the Discrimination in Employment Act from Labor to EEOC; transfer equal employment responsibility for federal employees from the Civil Service Commission to EEOC; end the responsibility of eleven agencies charged with contract compliance and give this authority to the Department of Labor. The Department of Justice would retain its responsibilities in equal employment

opportunity enforcement.

These changes, along with strengthening EEOC, should make more equitable enforcement of equal opportunity laws possible.

Another Point of View

Legislators turn to people power

from the Oregon Journal

In Oregon, due to the initiative and referendum, the electorate at large is the ultimate legislature.

Through the route of petition and election, the process gives the people the chance to reject anything the elected Legislature does, or to pass laws that the elected Legislature declines to.

It is interesting to note, however, that members elected to the Legislature are turning more and more to the people's legislative machinery.

Reps. Wally Priestley, D-Portland, and Curt Wolfer, D-Silverton, successfully referred a gasoline tax measure that the voters rejected.

A trio of representatives, Cecil Johnson, R-Grants Pass, Jack Sumner, D-Heppner, and Bernard Byers, D-Lebanon, are going to try to get enough signatures to put a death penalty measure on the ballot after they were unable to persuade their colleagues of the merits of their plan.

A pair of minority senators, Robert Smith, R-Burns, and L.B. Day, R-Salem, have an ambitious program to take to the voters. They hope to gather more than 600,000 signatures on at least three separate constitutional amendments.

One would reduce legislators' salaries to \$500 a month and allow that to increase thereafter only in proportion to the cost of living. Another would limit the highway fund just to construction and maintenance of roads, eliminating the financing of such things as parks and state police from gasoline taxes. The third would require that any surplus funds collected by the state be given to schools in dollar-for-dollar property tax relief.

There may be other similar efforts and there surely is nothing wrong with them. Legislators are citizens, too, and have the same opportunities as all other citizens to use the people's legislative tools.

But it is interesting to note that lawmakers, unable to get their favorite legislation through the Legislature, are turning increasingly to the people's legislative powers. This comes at a time when the people demonstrated a bit more confidence in their Legislature by voting to let the lawmakers call themselves into session whenever they desire.

Through the eyes of Mr. W.

by Harold C. Williams

This past weekend at the Dorchester Conference the Republican Party unanimously kayoed Affirmative Action by a convincing vote of 365 to 138. The convention delegates said "no" on the statement which was brought to the floor at the Dorchester Conference: "Should the law require affirmative action as a means of correcting past or present discrimination in employment or education?" Along with the overwhelming "no" vote, there were seventeen abstentions. After the Republicans voted against affirmative action, Donna Zajonc, Salem, a Republican legislative candidate said the lopsided vote on the discrimination issue occurred, she thinks, because of a misunderstanding over the way the dele-

gates were asked to vote on it. "They felt they were voting on a quota system. They're really not against affirmative action; affirmative action is making equal opportunity in access to employment for everyone."

The Republicans must have felt embarrassed because on Sunday they watered down their resolution - stating in essence that they are for equal opportunity in concept.

It should be clear to Blacks and other minorities by the actions of the Republican Party at the Dorchester Conference, that they are not and will not be sensitive to the needs of minorities and disadvantaged people. There's a lot of fanfare by the Republican Party that it

is open to all people and wanting to assure minorities that they are welcome into the party. As soon as Blacks and other minorities begin to believe there's some truth in this open door policy by the Republican Party, the Republicans slam the door in their faces with an unwelcome sign of "no" affirmative action.

I think it is important that Blacks and other minorities and all affected persons remember the actions of the Republicans at the Dorchester Conference and let their feelings be known come election time. If the Republican Party is going to have thumbs down on affirmative action, then Blacks and other minorities should have thumbs down on the Republican Party in the voting booth.

Labor law reform: The broader issue

by Bayard Rustin

For the past six months, American business groups and their erstwhile allies in the resurgent conservative movement have been beating the drums on labor law reform. "Big Labor," they tell us, is using the Labor Law Reform Act of 1978 as a battering ram against the gates of corporate America: if the gates swing open, they warn, hordes of power hungry labor bureaucrats will ravage the land, and bankrupt thousands of hapless businessmen.

Such a scenario is, of course, highly exaggerated, yet the opponents of the Williams-Javits bill have been extraordinarily successful in causing widespread confusion about the intent of the legislation. For one thing, frightened business leaders have labeled the reform package a "give-a-way to the Labor Bosses." If the bill passes, according to President Richard Leshner of the Chamber of Commerce, the nation's workers and consumer's "will be burdened with an unfair, imbalanced labor law designed to increase membership and economic and political clout of the big labor unions."

But the bill is not about "Union Power." It is, instead, a measure designed to revitalize and reinforce America's labor relations system, a system whose success or failure has an enormous impact on the economic well-being of low and middle-income Americans.

Black working people - despite what some conservatives and Black businessmen have argued - have an especially large stake in the outcome of this debate; it is Blacks who are disproportionately represented in those industries and geographic regions which have most steadfastly resisted trade union organizing drives - the textile, clothing and service

industries of the Deep South. Workers employed in those labor intensive industries receive meager wages (almost subsistence wages) and face the constant threat of temporary lay-off or outright dismissal. They exist on the economic fringes of society with little or no hope for advancement.

Trade unions do, however, make a difference. Recent studies have demonstrated that Blacks with trade union cards fare substantially better than their brothers and sisters working in non-union enterprises. According to the most recent data, Black union workers - both men and women - earned a median weekly income of \$169 in 1974. Non-union Blacks, on the other hand, earned only \$124 per week: a difference of over 35 percent. Another study showed that Black union members are less likely than non-union Blacks to suffer from temporary layoffs.

It would be naive and misleading, of course, to argue that trade union membership *per se* will magically advance the economic position of Southern Blacks and other low-wage workers. But strong trade unions do, nevertheless, serve as a solid foundation for future economic gains. And without them, workers cannot even begin to confront the other social and economic factors which perpetuate poverty.

Why haven't low-wage workers already organized themselves into trade unions? The answer is relatively simple: employers, because of their overwhelming political and economic power, have thwarted virtually every organizing drive, frequently by using illegal and unethical tactics.

Under the present law, there are few penalties which effectively deter unscrupulous employers from dismissing pro-

union employees, interrogating workers about their union sympathies, or bargaining in "bad faith." Similarly, anti-union companies can slowly dissipate pro-union sentiment by continually delaying representation elections through clever - but costly-legal maneuvers.

Some critics of the proposed reforms, such as Mr. Leshner of the Chamber of Commerce, complain that the bill "would transform the National Labor Relations Act from a remedial statute to a punitive law, designed to punish employers..." To a certain extent, Mr. Leshner is correct. But how else can one enforce a law which many employers find so tempting to violate?

The penalties included in the Williams-Javits bill are hardly draconian. Employers who repeatedly break the law and deny workers their most basic rights will be barred from receiving federal contracts. Who could possibly complain about that?

And employers who bargain in "bad faith" (as legally determined by the National Labor Relations Board) will be required to grant their employees retroactive wage increases comparable to those won by other workers. Without such sanctions - and these are mild indeed - workers have no protection whatsoever against law-breaking employers.

Business groups and Congressional conservative on both sides of the aisle have derisively called the reform package "just another piece of self-interest legislation." But when the Senate votes on the Williams-Javits bill, it will be more than a yes or no to what conservatives call "the Labor Bosses." It will be a yes or no to the thousands of workers, especially Black and low-wage workers, who want a fair chance to join the economic mainstream of America.

Thanks Boss... I needed that!!
I almost forgot I work for you, not the people! My man!!!

HOW TO GET AHEAD IN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Letters to the Editor

Fight bigotry

To the Editor:

Your March 2nd headline, "Cross Burns in Portland, Oregon," is a vivid reminder that our American dream of "equality for all" is unfortunately not shared by all. At a time when Nazis march in Skokie, Illinois and a cross burns in Portland, Oregon, the vast majority of us who believe in justice and despise intolerance should do so actively. We should heed George Washington's timeless advice "to give to bigotry no sanction."

Sincerely,
Robert F. Tropp
Assistant Director
Jewish Federation of Portland, Oregon

Refreshing

To the Editor:

I am continually impressed with how clearly and tastefully each issue is laid out. It's difficult to find a paper that is so visually pleasing, and uncluttered. It's also refreshing to read reporting that is sensitive and non-racist.

My appreciation to all of the Observer staff.

Elizabeth Groff
American Friends Service Committee

Doors open

To the Editor:

I think your column "From Behind The Wall" is an extremely valuable one, valuable not only to prisoners who seek recognition as individuals instead of numbers, but also to the community members that are interested in rehabilitation instead of revenge. I don't always agree with everything that Larry Baker writes, but then differences of opinion make some people Ford owners and others Chevy owners. I do think Larry helped open an important avenue for several hundred prisoners.

Well done.
Sincerely,
Donald Danford
#32323

Is this CP?

To the Editor:

I am writing as a citizen, parent of a first grader, representative of a neighborhood association, Community Coalition for School Integration member, Citizens For Quality Education For All Children member and graduate student in the PSU Urban Planning program.

I attended the School Board meeting at which the City Schools Commission proposal was presented and, then and afterwards, detailed some of the com-

munity concerns with the content of this proposal and the process of its formulation. The proposal was written by city and school district staff and lobbied by Superintendent Blanchard without School Board or public input. A prime concern is that the proposal allows the City Council (choosing from the Mayor's nominees) and the School Board to appoint Commission members. This process can not allow for the democratic representation of the community.

On 2/22 I and others found out by chance that the Mott Foundation would be considered by the City Council. Arriving at the Council Chambers we were informed by Allan Weber of the Mayor's Office that consideration would be postponed until 2/23. Later we found that the Council did pass the proposal on 2/22. Is this citizen participation?

I am disappointed that a Mayor whom I have liked and trusted could support such a plan and am disgusted by his and the District's efforts to ramrod this proposal through with as little publicity as possible. Politicians and planners - You work for this community, you do not own it! If you want community respect, support and cooperation for plans and programs, you must earn them by treating the community with respect and by insuring that programs are not your programs but the community's programs.

Citizens - The only way you will be treated with respect is to demand it!

Sincerely,
Claudia Fisher



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Deadline nears

(Continued from Page 1 Column 3)

In other late developments, State Senator Vern Cook confirmed his intention to run for U.S. Senate. So far he has no opponents in the Democratic race, the winner of which will face Senator Mark Hatfield in November.

Another race which promises to hold great interest is that for Commissioner Frank Ivancie's City Council seat, which is sought by State Senator Stephen Kafoury and Mike Burton. Arnold Biskar is the lone opponent of City Commissioner Mildred Schwab.

The three contenders for the position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction - Superintendent Verne Duncan, State Senator Fred Heard, and Ruth McFarland - will speak at the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs meeting on Saturday at 2:00 p.m. at the Masonic Hall, 116 N.E. Russell.

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