

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Oregon racism lives

Oregon is showing its "Southern exposure" once again. For years and years the people of Washington, D.C. were denied the right to vote for representatives in the Senate and Congress, and therefore a right to take part in the deliberations of government, by a group of Southern Senators. Finally, some of them died off and others left the Senate.

Last year, largely due to the efforts of Representatives Fauntroy and Diggs and the other members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Senate finally voted out a Constitutional Amendment that would allow the people of D.C. to elect two Senators and Representatives commensurate with their population. But who comes forward to deny the right of the citizens of Washington, D.C. to vote — the Oregon House of Representatives? Why? Because the two Senators and the Representatives from Washington, D.C. will undoubtedly be Black. What better reason to deny them the right of representation?

The ratification of a Constitutional Amendment is clearly the responsibility of the state legislature. But the members of the House of Representatives, led by Kip Lombard of Southern Oregon, took the easy way out and refused to vote. Instead they chose to avoid their responsibility and asked the people of Oregon for an "advisory vote" — a vote that will have no legal standing. Lombard, who is not yet able to decide on whether American citizens should have a right to vote, recently told the House Judiciary Committee that this is an issue "we have debated since high school". Yet a few minutes later, he told the same committee that he just had not had enough time to gather enough information to make a decision. After all, he said, there is no hurry. The

State of Oregon has at least seven years, and maybe longer, to make this difficult decision.

Were these representatives afraid to go back to their constituents after voting to give the basic right of citizenship to the Black people of Washington, D.C.? Were they afraid to go back to the voters of Southern Oregon, the Oregon coast and east of the mountains where racism still lurks? Or was the racism in their own hearts?

Our thanks to Gratton Kerans and the House members who had the guts to vote for citizenship rights for the people of Washington, D.C.

Still not a democracy

The supporters of the white Ian Smith regime of Rhodesia are pressing the Carter Administration to recognize the government of Rhodesia now that the election is over and Bishop Muzorewa has been elected. They contend that the reported large turnout of voters implies a free election with broad support for a one-man-one-vote democratic election.

They fail to mention the seats reserved for whites and the fact that whites will permanently control the police, the courts and the army.

What if that situation were applied here? Would these Smith supporters be satisfied if 50 positions in the U.S. Congress were reserved for Blacks, 40 for Chicanos and 10 for Indians. Would they call it "democracy" if Blacks were to control the police, the courts, the armed services and were firmly entrenched in government jobs?

No, that would not be "democracy"; that would be "reverse discrimination." The U.S. has no business recognizing Rhodesia or lifting its economic embargo until that nation has a true "free election".

This past week, 'Rhodesians' of all races went to the polls to elect what will be the country's first 'national' government. This was being hailed as a milestone in the history of the troubled country. The elections were hailed as ushering in Rhodesia's first Black majority government since one Cecil Rhodes stole the country some 88 years ago. But, newsmen can be devious characters too. They can deliberately distort the truth to serve their own ends.

In the Rhodesian elections, there seems to be a deliberate attempt to legitimize this illegitimate electoral farce. The Rhodesian regime, like its South African counterpart, is indefensible because it discriminates solely on the basis of color. For that reason, it has been a little difficult for the outside world to come to their aid — at least openly. Nonetheless, certain newspapers who, because they are the ones with the news gathering facilities, generally decide what the American public will read, seem to go all out to distort the Southern African situation.

That power, to decide what the public will read, has often been used to manipulate public opinion as far as the African situation is concerned. Most journalists have latched on to the "Blacks killing whites," "blood is thicker than water" and "communist penetration" clichés. It's interesting how selective these arguments are: though in Uganda, it was 'support the Ugandans against the Idi Amin dictatorship.' In Rhodesia, however, it's 'let's back the Smith or a Black moderate regime because it will be pro-West.' Not a word about human rights!

In the elections in question, the

journalists' emphasis was on the large turnout and the guerrillas' "failure" to disrupt the elections. As usual, they went out and managed to find a number of people dancing and celebrating in the streets. A lot of space and time was devoted to the extraordinary precautionary measures taken to "protect" the voters. There were 100,000 troops roaming all over the country to "discourage the guerrillas." Conveniently omitted from this same report, of course, was that these were supposed to be "free and fair elections"! How do you have free and fair elections when you have that many armed men (there were no women among them) manning the polling booths?

Smith, Muzorewa & Co. wanted a large turnout so they could persuade the U.S. and the rest of the world to recognize the regime that would result from these elections and have sanctions repealed.

So far, only South Africa has promised such recognition. In Britain, they will be holding general elections on the 3rd of May to form a new government. The present Labour government of Prime Minister James Callaghan lost a vote of confidence a few weeks back. Opinion polls at the moment show that the Conservatives, led by Margaret Thatcher, will probably win. If they do, they have promised to recognize the "new" Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government. The Labour government has promised to hold out recognition until such a time as the Patriotic Front guerrilla alliance is brought into Zimbabwe government.

The Carter Administration is of the same opinion as the Labour government but some conservatives

in the U.S. Congress are already pushing very hard for such recognition and an end to sanctions. Should a Muzorewa government (he is the one expected to win) win U.S. recognition and a repeal of sanctions, that would by no means ring the death knell for the Zimbabwe freedom drive. That can no longer be sidestepped; delayed yes, derailed NO.

Recognition of a Muzorewa regime would therefore only escalate the level of violence. More lives would be lost. Already 14,000 lives have been lost in the six year old war. The violence is bound to continue until such a time as ZIMBABWE, not "Zimbabwe-Rhodesia," takes her rightful place among the world's free nations. The war will continue until every Black vote counts as much as every white vote, not as in the present situation where one white vote counts as much as SEVEN Black votes.

Zimbabwe's freedom is of crucial importance not only to the people of Zimbabwe but also to the citizens of Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Zaire, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Black South Africa as well as all our brothers and sisters around the world. A free Zimbabwe would guarantee the freedom, security, prosperity and stability of all the above mentioned countries and pose a very serious threat, mater of fact, the most serious threat to date, to the partheid regime of South Africa. It would once more resurrect the so-called "domino theory": knock one and they all come tumbling down.

For white supremacy and colonial domination, the writing's on the wall: going, goin, goi.....

Nuclear scientist charges 'cover up'

by Ernest Sternglass

(PNS) — The accident at the Harrisburg nuclear power plant may have exposed about a million people to up to 130 times more radiation than the government has so far reported. The health effects of this exposure will be far more serious and long-lasting than the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has so far acknowledged.

The NRC reported only the external gamma radiation doses received from passing clouds of radioactive gases. It failed to calculate the total dose received by critical organs and bones from inhalation of fission gases, which produce the greatest biological damage.

The NRC's claim that pure xenon and some traces of iodine 131 were the only radioactive gases released is misleading and certainly unproven by information available to the public.

The government had no instrumentation in place to measure the precise composition of the radioactive steam that escaped into the atmosphere at the start of the Harrisburg disaster. The only instruments present were simple thermo luminescent dosimeters, which cannot distinguish between different chemical elements that give rise to the gamma radiation they register. However, there is every reason to believe that this steam contained many of the radioactive chemicals normally produced in the fission process, of which the NRC's Allen Brodsky, an expert in the field, lists 21.

Gases inhaled when fission products pass by in a cloud of steam produce a dose about 130 times

greater than the dose absorbed by the body from external gamma radiation, according to Brodsky's estimates. He bases his calculations on data from releases during earlier nuclear accidents and during nuclear bomb tests carried out in the 1950s and '60s.

Although the NRC has cited maximum accumulated doses as being 80 millirems in the course of a week following the Harrisburg accident, the true maximum doses to the lung may have been as large as 10,000 millirems. The doses to bones from elements including strontium 90 and 90, which are decay products of the rare gas krypton, are about 30 times greater than what is absorbed by external gamma radiation.

Not only was strontium 90 released during the accident, it is emitted during normal operations of nuclear power plants, as are cesium 137, berium 140 and larger amounts of xenon and other chemically inert gases. Official publications of the NRC clearly list these elements among annual radioactive releases into air and water.

Krypton and xenon are the most common radioactive fission products. The NRC has told the public the emissions contained mostly these inert gases, which do not necessarily produce the greatest biological damage. However, official statements generally have failed to point out that these elements decay into other more biologically hazardous materials, including cesium, berium and strontium.

Strontium 90 has been regarded by the scientific community as the most toxic of all fission products produced during nuclear testing. It collects in

the bones and can cause cancer and leukemia. It has a half-life of about 30 years and, like other radioactive isotopes produced in the fission process, lingers and builds up in soil. It may present a hazard in food grown near the Three Mile Island plant.

In the past few months, however, the NRC has issued new regulations that will no longer make it necessary to report the level of strontium 90 in local soil and milk routinely.

Failure to consider strontium 90 and other decay products emitted during the Harrisburg accident is tantamount to a cover-up of the seriousness of the damage done. It is, I believe, further evidence that the NRC is primarily concerned with protecting the nuclear industry.

The health hazard also has been discounted by other federal officials. Joseph A. Califano, Jr., secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, told the Senate Health sub-committee that so far, radiation that had leaked was not expected to cause a single cancer death among the people living within 50 miles of the plant.

Yet even using only the external dosages that the NRC has reported — 2 millirems to a population of about a million within 50 miles of the plant — between 0.5 and 50 cancer deaths can be expected, according to Karl Z. Morgan, professor of health civics at Georgia Institute of Technology and former director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Health Civics Division.

But if, in addition to the reported external doses, the unreported exposure from inhalation is considered, the number of cancers that may develop in the next 10-20 years might

be 300-2,500, depending on what risk estimate you adopt. Other health effects can be expected to include genetic defects, and physical and mental retardation among the newborn.

Repeatedly, officials have compared radiation doses at Harrisburg to those received during dental X rays. This is a completely deceptive attempt to minimize the true nature of the exposure. A dental X ray is confined to a couple of inches of relatively insensitive area. At Three Mile Island, the whole body is exposed. Furthermore, the dental X ray is over in a fraction of a second, while the inhalation of strontium 90 will irradiate the bone and bone marrow for many decades after the individual has been exposed. It also will affect an infant developing in the mother's womb, possibly years later. This is not true of dental X rays.

The Harrisburg health hazard is far from over. Emission of radioactive gases from the plant will continue over many months, and possibly years, as radioactivity is removed from the plant. The NRC has admitted this is unavoidable.

It may become necessary to advise people in the immediate area to leave, for background radiation last week was still 10 to 20 times what is normal.

To protect the population, we can insist that all animals that produce food or milk be fed imported seed and hay until the full extent of the contamination is established. This should continue for some time while rain washes radioactive elements deeper into the soil and into rivers and ocean and diminishes the levels in grass that serves as local seed. Despite the economic impact of such a course, it is one of the consequences we will have to face.

By and large, however, the only real protection is to prevent such accidents from recurring. We should work to convert nuclear power plants to conventional gas, coal or oil power plants. This was done in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in 1968, when the Northern States Light and Power Company converted a leaking experimental nuclear plant into a natural gas plant. All but a fraction of the total cost of a plant can be saved in conversion.

(Ernest Sternglass is a professor of radiological physics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. He is a longtime critic of nuclear power.)

Letters to the Editor

Commissioner thanks supporters

Dear Friends:

I am delighted to have this opportunity to thank you for your support.

Your presence at the banquet on Saturday, April 21st, sponsored by the Masons of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Oregon and its jurisdiction was indeed, an honor.

I have attended many banquets and had presented to me numerous awards, but this one was special. It came from the hearts of those whom I serve and love. I am deeply touched.

Many hours of hard labor, time and dedication went into making that evening you shared with me a success and I send my love to those who helped to make it a reality.

I will continue to do my best to al-

ways earn your belief, trust, respect and support both, as an individual and a public servant in discharging my responsibilities.

My tasks are not easy as I must confront challenges and obstacles daily and make decisions which affect us all in one way or another. However, these tasks are made easier through my own integrity maintained by my faith in the Almighty and my belief in you.

Truly, my evening with you was an evening to be remembered for a long, long time.

Best personal regards and richest blessings.

Sincerely,
Charles Jordan
Commissioner of Public Safety

Racism wins

(Continued from Page 1 Column 6)
justice for all." It is never said "none", although we've treated it that way. We've said, "all men Black", "all men women", and we've said "all men 18 year olds" and we've said "all men equally represented". And finally and at last, the opportunity is before this body to say "all men". After 178 years of in-

justice -- all men, all Americans.

The question is, is it haste? I am reminded of the Reverend Martin Luther King when in one of his last speeches he asked the nation, "How long?" And I ask that question to you today. Is not 178 years of denial enough?

And the Oregon House of Representatives said -- "No."

McElroy volunteers

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siness while a volunteer member of a task force organized by former Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

The many years McElroy has spent volunteering also have benefitted the participation of minorities in business while a volunteer member of a task force organized by former Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

While working in personnel for the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, McElroy was asked to assist the task force in encouraging minority colleges to increase their business curriculum.

The task force also attempted to motivate minority college students to seek out business careers, McElroy said.

"It gives me an intrinsic feeling of accomplishment, of satisfaction, which I can't obtain any other way," he said. "My wife and I have a common understanding about community needs and we will assist if we can."

McElroy's wife, Rochelle, a counselor at Portland Community College, has done volunteer work for the American Cancer Society. They have three children, Howard Jr., 12, Nicole, 6, and Kevin, 4.

"It's a comfort to know the services are there," he added. "They make this a better community."



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ALFRED L. HENDERSON
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"Mercy is nobility's true badge."
Shakespeare