

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Ivancie strikes back

Frank Ivancie made a smart move when with one vote he eliminated a strong candidate who would have opposed him for Mayor next spring and stole the role of "king maker" from Mildred Schwab.

Realizing that he could not win the three votes necessary for appointment as Mayor, Ivancie voted for Connie McCreedy, along with Charles Jordan, giving her that office. Thus Ivancie eliminated the possibility of Lloyd Anderson, Tom McCall or another prominent politician receiving the appointment and being put in a position where to run against Ivancie from a position of power. He also denied Commissioner Schwab the opportunity to select one of her favorites—Anderson or McCall—for the office.

Ms. Schwab, it should be remembered, cast her first vote for Ivancie, thus preventing Jordan from receiving the three votes he needed. This was apparently the purpose of that vote since she then deserted Ivancie. She also is reported to be angry with Ivancie for giving the appointment to McCreedy and has threatened to run against him next spring if a strong opponent doesn't surface.

Commissioner Schwab's main accomplishment in this intrigue was to prevent the appointment of Charles Jordan as Mayor of Portland.

Everyone's problem

Last spring a young man—a high school senior—stood before a group of Boise Elementary School students and told them how they would have to work hard to do well in high school, but "if you try—there's always someone out there to give you a hand."

This summer the same young man—Kevin Grigsby—went to Boardman, Oregon to start an apprenticeship with the Boilermaker's Union, still with high expectations and hopes of success. The next day he returned home, full of disappointment and fear.

While at the Portland General Electric construction site he was called "nigger," threatened, ignored, and refused food by men at the construction site and at a restaurant along the highway.

Now, no one seems to think they have any responsibility for what happened to Kevin, or any authority to remedy it. The Urban League just helped get the apprenticeship; the Boilermaker's Union just placed him on the job; the Labor Bureau just oversees the apprenticeship program; the construction company is just building the plant; and PGE just owns it.

Discrimination is against the law in Oregon. We call on the Governor to order a complete investigation of what happened to Kevin Grigsby at Boardman, leading to the prosecution of those involved.

Letters to the Editor

All prisons are 'worst'

To the editor:

I agree with your stance that Carl Bass should not be returned to Alabama. But I take exception to your statement that Alabama's prison is "...one of the nation's most brutal prisons."

It may well be worse than some prisons, but once anyone interested in the plight of prisoners begins to compare and to label prisons as some better, some worse, the very act of comparison defeats the goals of prison reform.

This year the Supreme Court of Sweden refused to extradite a man who had jumped his appeal bond and had been sentenced to 59 years in Kentucky. The Swedes had heard

of American prisons and wanted no part of sending a man to one of the, if not *the*, most degenerate prison systems in the world.

This doesn't mean Kentucky's prison is better or worse than Alabama's, or that southern prisons are better or worse than eastern or western prisons. The Swedes had heard of American prisons as a whole and that is how American prisons should be considered. Once the argument ensues that Arizona's prison is worse than Washington's, or that Oregon's prison is better than Iowa's, the attention that should be directed toward reform is diffused.

Granted, some prisons are worse than others, but all prisons in America are notoriously bad. It

makes little difference if one dies by an overdose of aspirin, by fire or by hanging, in the final analysis: death is death.

In the final analysis prison is prison and to say one is worse, one is better, is to defeat the purpose of reform.

Your editorial deals with why Carl Bass should not be returned to Alabama's prison rather than reform, but the reason he should not be returned is because of what goes on behind the walls in Alabama. And that should be the concern of everyone. Everyone pays for the results, whether it is Alabama, Kentucky, Attica, Oregon....

Sincerely,
Donald Danford

Monitoring essential

The leading question in the Black community this week is whether the current school administration can lead the district to an equitable desegregation program? Can the superintendent put into operation a plan he has always called impossible?

Dr. Blanchard has repeatedly said that no neighborhood children are turned away from the Early Childhood Centers because of lack of space if they register by the beginning of the school year. As late as August, he reported to the School Board, "Students living in the attendance areas of the early childhood education centers have priority to attend that school." He told the Board that all students who registered this year would be accepted, although space could become a problem in future years.

LeRoy Moore, principal of King, said 50 neighborhood Kindergarten students had been turned away from King. Since the Board passed its new desegregation policy those students have been allowed to attend King and new classes were established for them. If the policy had not been specifically changed, they could not have remained at King. Moore also said that about 50 neighborhood Kindergarten children have been turned away each year.

Where is the District's credibility?

As the school year begins it is even more obvious that the strong monitoring committee the Black United Front requested is essential. The school board decided to allow the establishment of a monitoring committee and allow it access to the information it needs, but provided no funding. The BUF had requested that the committee be provided a full time director by September 1st and a more extensive staff by January 1st.

Examples of reported incidents that point to the need for a monitoring committee include:

A Black middle school student denied a language class until his parents threatened to call a School Board member. The school claims letters were sent to parents last spring but this family received none. Surprise: No other Black students in language classes at that school.

Statements by Humboldt's principal that space will be made for returning Black children even if they have to be put in the halls! How about sending home some of the cross-town white 4-year-olds to make room for neighborhood third graders?

Students stand in the rain all around King School waiting for buses. Last year Mike Mathias said it was because 72 buses couldn't stop at the front door, all in an hour. What is the problem this year and what about the school board's promise of shelter and supervision?

It is unreasonable to expect a volunteer committee of interested parents and community people to monitor the school system. It requires paid staff—selected by and responsible to the citizen committee.



Boycott lessons

A Sense of Victory

by Herb L. Cawthorne

The power could be felt throughout the auditorium. The joy was apparent, as 800 or more Black citizens gathered at the King Neighborhood Facility to consider the work of the Board of Education regarding desegregation/integration.

The sense of victory was in the air, and the leadership of the Black United Front was ready to acknowledge what had been achieved by a community working together.

The boycott of the public schools was called, not because some fringe leadership wanted to vault itself into the spotlight of public opinion, but because the Board of Education had coldly refused to acknowledge the legitimate grievances of Black residents. The board had dismissed with cavalier arrogance the massive report of the Community Coalition for School Integration in November, 1978. Contrary to its pronouncements, the board was closed to true discussion—it was "open" to discuss only within the framework of its inequitable and discriminatory approach.

While a boycott was a drastic step to some unaware of the energy already devoted to solutions, it was an appropriate move to many, many in the community.

Those people were present on Thursday, August 30th, and they know that their unity, their support, their quality of commitment had brought about meaningful change.

The Board of Education, working many hours through difficult resolu-

tions, did make substantive policy changes. First, for the short-term, the Board gave Black parents choices which most whites in the community have always enjoyed—the choice to send children to schools close to home. Secondly, in the long-term, the board made the commitment to develop a *comprehensive plan*.

The comprehensive plan will speak to the demands of the Black United Front, the Coalition, and many other groups. It will include plans for a middle school in the Black community, as well as an equitable way to integrate all grade levels in the Black community. This is a major victory for those who want quality education for our children, along with an integrated experience when possible. The gains are tangible and worthy of support!

At the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet Saturday, September 1st, the famed civil rights catalyst, Rosa Parks, said, "We must realize that not only must we fight to change prejudice and discrimination, but we must fight to gain rights for Black people who will not fight with us." Her comment was aimed right at the heart of some Black people in Portland.

When the Black United Front announced the boycott, some Black folks screamed, "No!" When the movement gained momentum, some Black people tried to cut the cords of unity with razor-sharp lies, distortions and half-truths. The threads of unity, much to their chagrin, were made of steel; and this chicken-breasted betrayal by Black people

who are afraid of Black freedom and growth could not stop the thrust forward.

The lessons we have learned are important ones. First, unity can produce results, whereas the begging, hat-in-hand approach will give us nothing except a few silent voices in high places. Second, a willingness to combine community action with institutional politics can produce change, whereas activism in the community that ignores the reality of "power positions in institutions" drains our spirits by an inability to construct solutions. Third, the threat of aggressive action is positive, whereas the mealy-mouthed acquiescence that never wants any kind of conflict keeps the community in a lifeless coma.

One lesson which we must not forget: Those who joined in the movement made positive contributions, those who did not come forward with support were negative. The pressure of those who had the courage to come forward was felt by the Board of Education. The pressure produced the will to find a solution. The solution prevented the boycott.

On the other hand, those organizations and individuals who refused to speak out in favor of the boycott dissipated the pressure and, in fact, contributed negatively to the motivation to find a satisfactory solution.

Let's not forget who was positive and who was negative in this movement. It will help us keep our eyes wide open next time!



Another Rhodesia Parley

by N. Fungai Kumbula

At the Commonwealth prime ministers' conference in Lusaka, Zambia last month, after a lot of jawboning, Britain was finally forced to concede ground to the demands of the Africans. Before coming to this conference, Margaret Thatcher and her government had hinted on more than one occasion that they were ready to recognize the government of Muzorewa and to lift sanctions which would open up trade between Rhodesia and Britain again legally for the first time since 1968. The Africans, fresh from their highly successful Organization of African Unity summit meeting in Monrovia, flexed those still bulging muscles and forced Thatcher to do a complete about turn. Thus Britain has forced to concede that the Muzorewa regime that she was going to recognize had certain very serious deficiencies. She was further forced to accept the African demands for a whole new round of talks that would lead to new elections in which all Zimbabweans would participate and which would be monitored by Britain.

On September 10th, this particular meeting will take place in London. The participants will be a delegation from Robert Mugabe's ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union), another from Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU (Zimbabwe African Peoples Union) and the third delegation will come from the clowns in Salisbury, the so-called Muzorewa government. As with everything else connected with that charade, this delegation promises to be just as ridiculous. Even though Muzorewa still claims to be in charge, Smith has demanded to be included in this delegation. The British had expressed the hope that Smith would stay home in the interests of giving the Muzorewa delegation some credibility.

Ndabaningi Sithole's group and James Chikerema, the latter, a former deputy to Muzorewa, are also demanding to be included in the delegation from Rhodesia. All this makes for a very interesting conference because you will have Smith pulling for the whites, Nkomo and Mugabe pulling for the Africans, Muzorewa and Sithole straddling the fence and Chikerema somewhere in the confusion. This will be the first time that such a conference where the Zimbabwe problem will be sought through negotiation since the abortive attempt at Geneva in 1976. Then, the whole exercise broke down over the intransigence of the Smith

delegation. At the moment all indications are that nothing much has changed.

Smith may no longer be the titular prime minister of Rhodesia but he still manipulates everything as much as ever. The demands the Africans made in 1976 have not been met and so they will be presenting not merely a similar package but even more "radical" demands. The Africans are in a much stronger position now than they were in '76 and Smith is in a more desperate position. Muzorewa, who came to Geneva boasting the largest popular following of any Zimbabwean leader, comes to London cutting a very ridiculous figure. All his pretensions to be "in charge" in Rhodesia have been exposed time and time again to be mere pretensions. He comes to London, not as a Black leader as he so often claimed, but is seen for what he is: a stand-in for the whites.

While the British would very much like to see Muzorewa continue as prime minister of Rhodesia because he has proved to be the "good boy", they are also painfully aware of the ridicule in which all Africa holds him. After Lusaka, Britain seems in no particular hurry to confront the Africans again. To avoid any further Anglo-African standoff from which Britain might once again be forced to back down, Britain will therefore be playing her cards much closer to her chest. Gone are the days when they could "tell these natives what to do!"

Given this scenario, it's highly unlikely that there will be an early resolution at this upcoming conference. One demand the Africans will be pressing and which both Smith and Muzorewa will very strongly resist is the dismantling of the entire Salisbury regime; the "government," the army, civil service, the police, everything. The Africans are proposing that all this would be replaced by a government of the people which will then institute a national army, choose a proper civil service and a more responsible police force. This, Smith will resist because without the armed forces in their present make-up, he can forget it. Once a Zimbabwe national armed forces take over, all

those outrageous white privileges would also be swept away. The wealth of the nation would be more equitably distributed and all Zimbabweans can then enjoy the fruits of true citizenship in their own land. This is all that Smith is afraid of; that soon, very soon Africans would have access to all the opportunities hitherto reserved exclusively for whites.

The Front Line states of Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania and Angola would like to see a quick solution to the 15 year old Rhodesian deadlock and Britain is just as anxious to be rid of this problem once and for all. For the Front Line states, an acceptable solution would mean a normalization of relations with Zimbabwe, an acceptance of the "prodigal son" back into the fold for the first time since 1964. The liberation war has been costly to all of southern Africa not only in terms of money but also in terms of human lives, ruined economies, deterioration of social services and interruption of international trade as well as disruption of communications.

If the Zimbabwe situation could be amicably settled, all those refugees who have fled to Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique can return home to Zimbabwe, Zambia, which suffers perennial corn shortages would have a ready market once again and ease her dependence on South Africa; Mozambique can proceed with her reconstruction, unhampered by the fear of frequent cross-border raids from Rhodesia, and Botswana would have access to Black Africa for the first time.

On the other hand, if this latest diplomatic exercise fails, it will be back to the battlefield. Neither side is likely to give up. And the chances of a solution through the barrel of a gun? It's not something that can be expected to take place tomorrow. It could take six months to a year but, with as many as 50 people getting killed each week, the price will be horrendous. In the end, when it's all over and done with, the task of reconstruction will be something else again. All the conferees will be aware of this and we would hope that for once, common sense will prevail.



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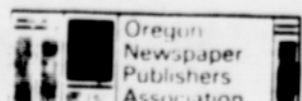
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