

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Appoint a Black to PDC

Last week Commissioner Charles Jordan again complained that the Portland Development Commission has no Black representation. This was triggered by Mayor Connie McCreedy's refusal to appoint Jordan's nominee, Larry Jackson, because she considers him to have a conflict of interest. The Council appointed a white.

Jordan then nominated Attorney Ken Dixon, but that appointment has not yet been filled.

Do conflicts of interest apply only to Blacks? Larry Jackson is involved in a company that might bid on the citywide cable television franchise, a contract that has nothing to do with the Portland Development Commission.

On the other hand, most of the PDC Commissioners in recent years have been involved in the building trade, banking interests or are married to persons in these fields. These persons are directly involved in trades that do business with PDC.

For example, a controversy rose a couple of years ago when the Tom Walsh Construction Company received a Housing Authority of Portland building contract although it was not the lowest bidder. PDC had financed and developed the property and sold it to the Housing Authority. The award was based on what was considered to be a better design, but the membership of Bob Walsh on PDC looked suspicious to some.

Both Tom is a member of the State Highway Commission. Is the close relationship of PDC

and the Highway Commission on projects such as the Union Avenue re-development a conflict for two brothers who are also involved together in a construction firm.

There are and has been many seeming conflicts of interest in PDC and other agencies--but it is only important when the man in question is Black.

PDC is a very visible agency in Albina -- having demolished much of what was once a residential area. Probably no other neighborhood in the state has been so consistently leveled by government--the Coliseum, Emanuel Hospital, the Fremont Bridge, the freeway, the school district administration building, etc., etc.

PDC also is the agency that -- with Model Cities and other federal funds -- rehabilitated many Albina homes. They sometimes allowed a sloppy job, as well as coercing, abusing and threatening residents.

PDC is still a dirty word with many Albina residents who recall the abuses. Perhaps there have been changes, but some of the reputation remains.

A Black person on the Commission, one who lives and works in the neighborhood and has daily contact with those who will be most affected by PDC policy and procedures, is long overdue.

Kenneth Dixon would serve well on the Commission. He has no "conflict of interest". Commissioner Jordan is right in promoting his appointment.



H-U-N-G-E-R

by N. Fungai Kumbula

A recent CBS evening news broadcast focused on the world hunger situation. The statistics were staggering: between a third and half a billion (300,000,000-500,000,000) people currently face starvation around the world -- that's the equivalent of one and a half to two and a half times the population of this entire country. There have been cases of starvation on a massive scale in the past several years. Bangla Desh, Pakistan, India, Ethiopia and the Sahel region of West Africa immediately come to mind.

The Ethiopian drought of 1973 so enraged the Ethiopian students they ended up overthrowing their government. Then Emperor Haile Selassie I, Elect of God, King of Kings, Lion of Judah, had run the country as a fiefdom for fifty-eight years (1916-1974). His rule was unquestioned and as far as he could recall, there had never even been the slightest challenge to his authority. He had become something of a demi-god.

With the drought of 1973, however, came a very abrupt change. About a million Ethiopians are said to have perished. Instead of informing the world and seeking international assistance, the Selassie government sought to keep the world from finding out. Supposedly, Selassie was too ashamed to let the world know that his people were starving. Consequently, by the time the world found out and international aid began to flow in, the damage had already been done. Enraged, the students took to the streets in the most massive demonstration the country had ever seen.

After several months of ever larger demonstrations and bolder challenges to Selassie's feudal rule, the army stepped in and dumped him. In one short week, he went from the Conquering Lion of Judah to just a common prisoner. But, he was so senile by this time -he was 0-

80-up -- that until he died a few months later he was unaware that he was no longer the Emperor.

Back to the news broadcast: the reasons given for this much suffering were: political, "guns before butter" poor communications and so forth and so on. The political reasons were the most interesting: the broadcast singled out Pakistan's development of a nuclear weapon while millions of Pakistanis were starving. Also mentioned was Ethiopia where, according to the newscast, the food was distributed only to those with Soviet leanings.

What was interesting about this newscast was not so much what it said as what it left out. There was no mention, not even in passing of either Rhodesia, South Africa or the United States of America. Politics: In Rhodesia's seven year guerrilla war, starvation has come to be a frequently employed tool.

The government, first of Ian Smith and now of Abel Muzorewa has been known to burn people's crops and destroy their livestock if they are suspected of aiding the guerrillas. Once self sufficient in terms of food, for the first time this year, the people are worried about starvation all because of government interference. Smith and Muzorewa cannot win the war so they take it out on the civilians. And Muzorewa is still a practising bishop!

As if that's not bad enough, Muzorewa has been sending his planes into Mozambique and Zambia blowing up vital communications facilities and food producing farms. This has forced Zambia into dependence on Rhodesia and has given Muzorewa a stranglehold on Zambia. He is therefore applying pressure on Zambia's president Kenneth Kaunda to stop supporting the Patriotic Front guerrillas or he will starve Zambia to death. He is trying to do the same in Mozambique.

Millions of fellow Africans are in dire danger of starvation and it's all thanks to the good bishop.

The omission of South Africa is even more curious and more distressing. One of every two Black children born in the homelands dies before the age of five due to kwashiorkor (malnutrition). The ones who survive are generally scarred for life and all because of South Africa's system of apartheid. At the same time, South Africa's whites enjoy the highest standard of living anywhere in the world (except maybe Liechtenstein) off the exploitation of those same Africans. Somehow CBS did not see fit to mention this.

In the good old U.S. of A. there were impassioned pleas for an increase in defense spending recently while there were calls for cuts in every other sector. So defense spending went up again while the number of people sliding below the poverty datum line increased. Almost everyday one reads distressing stories about the plight of sharecroppers in the South, old folks living on dog food, old folks and poor families in the Black neighborhoods having their utilities turned off for non payment of bills and other families being thrown off the welfare rolls. As one speaker on a streetcorner put it: "It used to be 'Two chickens in every pot and two cars in every garage.' Now it might as well be: 'Two M-16s on every porch and two tanks in every driveway.'" We might starve but we will be ready!

Fungai Kumbula can be heard Fridays on KOAP-TV on Art Alexander's show, "TCB". Kumbula's segment, "On Africa" will be aired at 7:00 p.m.

LUTHER



By Brumic Brandon, Jr.

Cawthorne explores boundary changes

(Continued from page 1 col. 6) school is poor. You can never have 'volunteerism' when parents are forced to move their children because they don't get quality education. This is intolerable.

"When every Black child is assigned to a desegregated school -- and I'm not tied to the 50-50 ratio -- and can move to other schools for special programs, then this is what I mean when I say 'voluntary'."

The new desegregated school will be designed to serve the children who reside in the attendance area, but will be open to any white child who wants to attend on the basis of space available. The ECE four and five year old classes should serve the children living in the attendance area and in the cluster. "I believe there are white families who would transfer their children in order to have an integrated experience, providing the program is good."

The achievement level of the Albina schools must be raised. "Steve Buel and I have discussed this in the Board's curriculum and instruction committee and are designing a process so we can look at what is happening in those schools. The Albina schools still rank in

achievement tests at or near the bottom of the district. I don't accept the district's usual explanation that this is because of the socio-economic level."

"Sarah Newhall and I are starting a series of meetings with parents and with staff to find out why Black students are disproportionately suspended and expelled. Then we will determine what policy changes need to be made."

Regarding the two plans submitted by the desegregation/integration committee of which he is a member, Cawthorne said, "Working under a very restrictive time frame, the desegregation/integration committee work cannot be taken as anything near a final product -- it is not even something agreed to by the committee itself. We 'agreed' to discuss it with the community. If you look at it as preliminary -- as a process -- it is not too bad. It does present some of the issues that need to be discussed."

The reaction of the Black community to the plans was swift, with the Black United Front quickly denouncing the plan.

"I got the clear message not to mess with Adams and I understand that message. I would like for people

to push for a stronger program at Adams. I have problems with it, but I think it could be strengthened if the students in the Adams feeder schools were not recruited out at an early age and not allowed to return.

"We also got the message that we can't make Boise an Early Childhood Education Center. We will have to talk to the Boise and Adams communities to see what options are available and what they want to do."

Cawthorne would like to see the Black community push for better programs at Adams, Jefferson and Grant. "For the past fifteen years Black people have gotten more education; there are many younger people with college degrees and good positions. I would like to see them get in and develop programs that would put Black adults into the schools where they could have more contact with youngsters in a way that helps them academically."

This would require the staffs in these schools to relate to the students and depend on the community for resources to upgrade the schools. The administrators would have to be more receptive to the community.

The untold Mississippi story

By Norman Hill Executive Director A. Phillip Randolph Institute

Of all the Black political gains during 1979, none was more significant or more encouraging than the little-noticed breakthrough in a most unlikely state--Mississippi

Long regarded as one of the few remaining bastions of racism, crude conservatism and widespread poverty, Mississippi has finally embarked on a kind of political reformation. The old tactic of pitting poor Blacks against poor whites has given way to a new alliance of minorities and working people. As a result, the state which gave 87 percent of its votes to Barry Goldwater in 1964, and 63 percent to George Wallace in 1968 has now elected William Winter, a racial moderate, as its new governor.

Black people, who voted in large numbers, played a crucial role in electing Winger, the same candidate who was defeated twice before because of his so-called "race-mixing" views. But even more important, Blacks scored truly impressive gains in the Mississippi State Legislature.

Before this year's election, the House of Representatives, which has

122 seats, had only 4 Black members, only 3 percent of the total. The situation in the State Senate was worse--only 1 Black member. And this was in a state whose population is 37 percent Black.

This year, however, Blacks elected 11 new state representatives for a total of 15, a threefold increase. The results in the state senate elections were somewhat disappointing, but even there Blacks picked up an additional seat. While Blacks are still seriously under-represented in the Mississippi legislature, the victories of 1979 provide a solid foundation for future progress. Moreover, this year's successful campaigns taught Black Mississippians several important lessons.

First, Black people learned once again that their political strength is at a peak only when they unite with other groups. In many instances, the new Black legislators won many white votes, votes from working people who realize that the basic dividing line in America, and even in Mississippi, is the economic line rather than the color line. White people voted for Black candidates

because those candidates were pledged to support programs and policies designed to benefit all people, most especially lower-income and working people. In short, economic self-interest won out over primitive racism.

Second, Mississippi elections proved that massive voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives in Black communities can make the difference between victory and defeat. In virtually every district won by Black legislative candidates, the Black turnout had increased substantially over past elections. And it was these new voters, many of them once too frightened to register, who provided the margin of victory for Blacks.

Finally, when Black people are confident of their own political strength, as they were in Mississippi, they can begin transforming even the most backward and oppressive governments. Without confidence and hope, people become mired in pessimism and apathy, both of which are powerful weapons in the hands of people who believe in the old line, "if you're Black, keep back."

Perkins recruits for State Department

(Continued from Page 1 column 3) well as with people who do not look like themselves."

Dr. Perkins has already been in Seattle and in Los Angeles and find both cities ready and hospitable to some of his ideas for future contacts with them. In Los Angeles, although Mayor Tom Bradley had to be away on another engagement, he had made arrangements for Dr. Perkins to "interact" with the Los Angeles City Council.

"I found the Council receptive to some ideas as to how we can help African legislators-by bringing them here. (to L.A.) to study American practices."

With all his travel and living in such exotic lands as Taiwan where he met and fell in love with his Chinese wife, in Thailand where their elder daughter was born, or in Japan where the second daughter was born, Perkins dreams (now and then) of living again in-Portland.

Walker home during the distinguished visitor's stay. The Links Committee for International Trends and Services were hostesses for that evening event. Committee Chairman is Mrs. Geraldine Christian. Link president is Mrs. Clementyne Guy.

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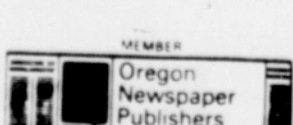
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