

EDITORIAL/OPINION

1979--and the future

As we come to the holiday season it is natural to reflect on the year that is fast slipping away. It has been one of the most eventful years in this community for a long time.

The most significant happening was the development of the Black United Front, which in a few short weeks brought the school district to the conference table--something that has never happened before. It proved that mass politics can work--people who are united and whose purpose is just can make significant gains.

The year began with the report on the Coalition, which documented racism, discrimination and poor education. The School Board met the report with defiance.

Next came the HEW investigation of the School District by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The staff found discrimination but the District got off the hook on a technicality although HEW had made findings of non-compliance four times since 1975.

The Black United Front, through a threatened boycott, got some changes and some promises. A bonus was the appointment of Herb Cawthorne to the School Board.

Whether the Board delivers will depend on the community keeping pressure on the Board, and letting the members know what they want and what they do not want.

There have been other breakthroughs;

- The BUF is investigating continuing charges

of police brutality.

- The Union Avenue Development has finally been approved--after years of planning.

Serious problems remain:

- Economic development: The Black community continues to be left out of planning and gets only a few crumbs of the millions coming into the city for development. The real beneficiaries are the corporations who get assistance in developing their businesses.

- CETA is still a mess.

- Minority contractors and businesses are not receiving fair consideration.

- Employment with state, county and city governments (and of course the School District) is still restricted, with Blacks in low-level jobs.

- The cost of housing is unreasonable, with persons on low, fixed incomes spending too much of their incomes for shelter.

- The cost of utilities is skyrocketing with the same effect. Will the elderly die of exposure?

- The elderly poor are ignored, with the programs designed to aid them dwindling away.

- Trojan is still with us.

- Young people suffer from lack of education, no jobs, few recreational programs, dependence on drugs.

- Polluted air, food additives, herbicides and pesticides, etc., contribute to the cancer epidemic.

- The Black United Front has its work cut out for it!

To be equal

By Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

When George Meany stepped down as President of the AFL-CIO an important era in labor's history ended.

Meany earned admiration and respect as a tough no-nonsense fighter for working people. He took over a divided labor movement infected with unions that actively discriminated against Blacks and other minorities.

By the end of his quarter-century at the helm of organized labor, working Blacks were more likely than whites to be unionists, the AFL-CIO had made progress in ending discriminatory practices, and it was a powerful ally of Black people through its political clout that helped pass civil rights bills and other important measures.

Few people remember that when the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was in its early stages it dealt only with public accommodations. It was George Meany, the Bronx plumber whose base was an all-white father-son local, who insisted that the Act ban employment discrimination.

Not the least of his accomplishments was his outspoken advocacy of full employment, national health insurance, and other policies desperately needed by Black citizens.

When the administration was planning to put some social programs in a fiscal straitjacket in order to cut the budget deficit, Meany insisted that jobs were more important than accounting procedures.

The Meany era ends with the labor movement facing a changed economy that is geared to services

rather than manufacturing, and facing new challenges to its prestige and its support.

His successor, Lane Kirkland is well aware of those new challenges and can be expected to move labor into a new era of change.

One such challenge is the decline in union membership as a percentage of the American labor force. This is a direct result of the shift away from manufacturing, where unions are strong, and into white collar work, where they have traditionally been weak.

But still another factor has been labor's failure to make inroads among the poorest in the dirtiest jobs. The sweatshops still exist, even if some of them are in the open air of agricultural plantations.

Union membership will continue to shrink unless the labor movement makes organizing the vast movements of impoverished workers a priority.

Another challenge lies in the low status the public gives the labor movement. Increasingly it has come to be seen as a haven of highly paid skilled workers who get huge raises that outstrip inflation.

There's a lot of falsehood in that charge, but the fact remains that our two-tier labor force results in widely disparate rewards for workers doing similar tasks or bearing similar responsibilities.

A worker on an auto assembly line may get far more than a worker on the line in a smaller, weaker industry. That reflects a distortion of the economy, not of unionism.

Nevertheless, it's one of the reasons why the public talks of Big

Labor in the same breath as Big Business or Big Government. Since the average paycheck today buys less than it did in 1966, the charges about labor's greed don't hold water, but they persist anyway.

Another challenge to the labor movement lies in its relations with Black workers. The disproportionate Black membership figures haven't been reflected in the ranks of labor leadership.

And while many unions that once discriminated have changed their charters and now have Black members, some still cling to barriers that keep Blacks out.

But the basic challenge to labor in the 1980s will be the national drift to selfishness that retards social advances and combats the key items on the agenda of both labor and minorities, items like full employment and national health.

The partnership of the labor movement and the civil rights movement has been responsible for some of the most progressive steps in the past two decades. It's been a partnership that weathered differences over some issues.

It's a partnership that needs to be strengthened in this new "era of limits." For the "limits" we hear are invariably limits applied only to low-wage workers, poor people, and minorities.

There will be enormous changes coming in the way we live and in the way we earn our daily bread. Workers and minorities have to join together in strong alliances to help shape those changes. The alternative is to be shaped by them.



1979: THE YEAR THAT WAS

PART I

By N. Fungai Kumbula

The holiday season is upon us once again. This is the time most journalists take time to remind us all of what the year has wrought and what's in store for the coming year. This is also the end of the '70's.' Up till fairly recently, the consensus among journalists was that the seventies were a "sleeper." Nothing much happened unlike the sixties. This year however, seems to have gone all out to change that perspective. A look at the international scene: First, AFRICA:

UGANDA: After eight years of one of the most brutal reigns of terror in modern times, "Life President, Field Marshal Alhaji Idi Amin Dada" was finally overthrown with the help of Tanzanian troops. During his relatively short reign, his mismanagement, corruption, wholesale massacre had brought a once prosperous nation to near total breakdown. Only massive infusions of aid from "fellow" Muslim, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya kept Uganda going. The new administration of Godfrey Binaisa is having a very rough time rebuilding the former "pearl" of Africa.

LIBYA: Col. Muammar Qaddafi, Libya's head of state was one of the few people not only to defend Amin but actually to come and fight alongside of his troops to prevent the ouster of Amin. The Ugandan liberation forces, however, swept Amin from power and Qaddafi was forced to recall his troops. Always a controversial figure, Qaddafi's role in Uganda for the first time put him at odds with the Organization of African Unity.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA: Another dictator, Macias Nguema Biyogo of Equatorial Guinea also found himself at the receiving end of some of his own medicine. Sometimes dubbed the "Butcher of Africa," his reign of terror was so bad he had forced fully 25 per cent of Guinea's population into exile. Amnesty International, the human rights organization periodically cited Equator Guinea as one of the most repressive regimes in the world. One day in August, he woke up to find the army had taken over and he fled into the interior of the country. His pursuers followed, captured him, tried and executed him. Suddenly, the self-proclaimed "Unique Miracle" was very dead.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: Watching all this, one Jean Bedel Bokassa, self-proclaimed and self-

crowned Emperor of the Central African Empire must have wondered if he had suddenly become a member of the endangered species; a species called dictators. Always a little wacky, this year he decided he wanted schoolchildren to start wearing uniforms. These uniforms, with his inevitable emblem, were sold only through one outlet owned by, you guessed it, his wife. Talking about trying to drum business!

The students protested that they could not afford these uniforms. True to form, Bokassa took this as a personal affront and so he had the students arrested and crammed into jails. So crowded were these young kids (12-18) that some were trampled to death while others were clubbed to death by the guards on Bokassa's orders. When word went out, the other students took to the streets, clashing with the soldiers. The French, once Bokassa's main allies, backed a coup that quickly ousted Bokassa. The French acted so quickly not out of concern for the students or human rights considerations but because they had received word that Bokassa was looking for and likely to get aid from Libya. So the coup was designed to "keep the CAR from getting too radicalized."

ZAIRE: Shortly after the fall of Idi Amin, another dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire made a hasty trip to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to get assurances from President Julius Nyerere that Tanzania would not attack and try to liberate Zaire next. In less than a year, Mobutu had watched with horror as three fellow dictators fell. The role of the French in the Central African Republic had him particularly worried. If they were so quick to dump Bokassa, wouldn't they be just as quick to get rid of him too? After all, rumors have been circulating in Western capitals that maybe it is time to do away with Mobutu and replace him with someone who is not so openly dictatorial. Also, within the past two years, Mobutu just barely survived two attempts at overthrowing his regime.

SOUTH AFRICA: The "Muldergate" scandal finally came to a head forcing the resignation of former Minister of Information, Connie Mulder. Subsequently, Muldergate mastermind Eschel Rhoodie was arrested in France where he had fled to and returned to South Africa where a judge promptly sentenced him to six years in jail. The

biggest fall, however, has to be that of former prime minister and prime architect of South Africa's apartheid system, Johannes Vorster. He had given up the premiership to take over the ceremonial post of president, but his implication in Muldergate forced him to resign. The once all powerful, numero uno Afrikaner thus was forced out in disgrace.

RHODESIA: Ian Smith stepped down and was "succeeded" by Bishop Abel Muzorewa after the signing of the so-called internal agreement. Muzorewa's first pledge was to end the seven year guerilla war that has finally worn down minority domination. After almost nine months in "office," not only has he failed to end the war, he has been forced to agree to a whole new round of elections under a vastly different constitution. This is a tacit admission on his part that his "government" has been illegal all along. The elections will probably be held within the next three to six months, if only the parties concerned can ever agree on a ceasefire.

NIGERIA: Nigerians recently went to the polls and elected Alhaji Shehu Shagari to the country's first civilian Head of State in thirteen years. Since 1966, there has been one military regime after another.

GHANA: Dr. Hilary Liman was the victor in Ghana's first elections in almost ten years. As in Nigeria, Ghana had had one military regime after another. Botswana and Kenya too held elections thus continuing the trend started in West Africa and, which, hopefully, will sweep the rest of the continent.

Africa's general move away from dictatorships to civilian control will now make it easier to focus attention on the minority regimes of southern Africa. Now there is no longer an Amin, Biyogo or Bokassa to point to as "examples of African leaders." The OAU too has started an African wide human rights watchdog agency. Only a few years ago, this would have been unheard of.

All in all, apart from the sobering death of one of Africa's greatest sons, Dr. Agostinho Neto of Angola, it has been a very good year for Africa. The murder of the other greatest son, Steve Biko, on the other hand, serves as a reminder that the struggle is far from over. As we salute Africa, we should not forget these heroes so they may not have died in vain.

Department of Labor Proposes Specific Goals

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Labor has proposed specific goals in every part of the country for utilization of minority employees by federal and federally assisted construction contractors and subcontractors.

The goals would be the minority workforce percentages of the total workforce.

"Because these proposed goals are comprehensive and would for the first time cover the construction industry on a nationwide basis," the proposal states, "the Department of Labor is inviting comments, suggestions and recommendations from the public for a period of 60 days from publication." The proposal was published in the Federal Register on September 17th.

Department of Labor regulations (41 CFR 60-4.6) require the Director of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) to issue goals and timetables for minority and female utilization by federal and federally-assisted construction contractors and subcontractors. The regulations require that the goals be based on workforce, demographic or other relevant data. Goals and timetables for female utilization on construction projects were established April 7, 1978 in a Federal Register notice which stated that new standards and goals for minority utilization would be published after a uniform methodology for developing nationwide minority employment goals had been established.

The department now is proposing that the basic geographical units for establishing goals will be the SMSAs (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas) which comprise 660 countries and contain the majority of the United States' population. For those areas located outside the SMSAs the geographical unit will be the EA (Economic Area). The Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. De-

partment of Commerce, has defined 183 such areas, along county lines, covering the entire country.

The goal established for minority utilization for either the SMSA or the EA and will be the minority workforce percentage for each such unit.

Separate goals are listed in the proposal for each of the 285 SMSAs and for each of the 183 EAs. When a covered construction contract is for a project located in an SMSA, the goals for that SMSA apply. When a covered construction contract is located in an area outside of an SMSA, the EA goals for that area apply.

An appendix to the proposal lists the goals for each SMSA and EA.

Timetables for the achievement of goals are not provided because "it is assumed that after 10 years of Executive Order and other equal employment opportunity efforts to increase the minority participation in the workforce, these levels should be at least at the 1970 minority workforce figures." The goals were calculated using Bureau of the Census data.

Some of the proposed goals are: New York SMSA, 22.6 per cent; Newark SMSA, 17.3 per cent; Philadelphia SMSA, 17.3 per cent; Atlanta City, New Jersey SMSA, 18.2 per cent; Baltimore SMSA, 23 per cent; Washington, D.C. SMSA, 28 per cent; Petersburg, Virginia, SMSA, 30.6 per cent; Atlanta SMSA, 21.2 per cent; Miami, Florida, SMSA, 39.5 per cent; Chicago SMSA, 19.6

per cent; New Orleans SMSA, 31 per cent; Houston SMSA, 27.3 per cent; Laredo, Texas, SMSA, 87.3 per cent; and San Francisco-Oakland SMSA, 25.6 per cent.

The proposed goals are based upon both male and female minority representation in the workforce.

The nationwide goals for female utilization established April 7, 1978, would not be affected by the proposed notice. Neither will the minority goals under voluntary "hometown" plans approved by OFCCP. The female goals established last year were 3.1 per cent for the first year; for the second year, 5 per cent; and for third year, 6.9 per cent.

Comments on the proposal should be addressed to Edward E. Mitchell, Director, Division of Program Policy, Room C-3324, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210, telephone (202) 523-9426.

The equal employment opportunity requirements are issued under the authority of Executive Order 11246 which prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from employment discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin and requires the employers to take affirmative action to hire and promote women and minorities. The order is administered by the Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs in the Employment Standards Administration.



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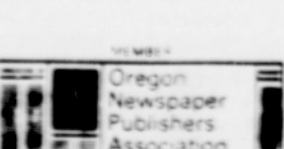
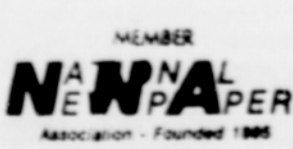
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