

EDITORIAL/OPINION

A question of ethics

A thirteen year old child is accused of killing a four year old girl, and an earlier death of a three year old cousin is being investigated.

The law protects the identity of children and prevents the release of their identity to the news media and to the public. Aside from the fact that the child might be innocent -- in fact she is innocent until proved guilty -- the whole direction of the juvenile court system is rehabilitation. The secrecy involved is to protect the child in case the arrest was in error, and also to give the child a chance for a future, should she be found guilty.

True, the identity of the child would eventually leak out, to friends and neighbors and to school mates. But without the involvement of the media, the damage would be restricted.

In this case, the Oregonian requested the child's identity and when it was refused, sought to obtain it through the courts, challenging the constitutionality of the law. Although the Oregonian had already obtained the child's identity from other sources, they did not reveal it while the court case was pending.

The Journal, obtaining the same information, rushed it into print. Now the child's name has been splashed across the newspapers and over the air.

We do not disagree with the Oregonian's contention that the press has a right to the facts, and that it has a right to print the facts. But this case demonstrates why the law exists and why courts are reluctant to release information about children.

Although the Journal probably has a right to

print what it knows, the ethics in doing so are certainly questionable. Has anyone benefited by the release of this child's name and history? It certainly was not done in a way to constructively challenge the law. A child who has lived a miserable life and who perhaps brought suffering and death to others has been hurt again by a society that has failed her. This time that hurt could and should have been prevented.

Political prisoner freed

Ben Chavis was recently released from a North Carolina prison where he had been held for more than four years, the last of the Wilmington Ten to be released.

The Wilmington Ten were convicted in 1972 of burning a white owned grocery store during a period of violence, when white vigilantes invaded the Black community. The conviction, which civil rights leaders have considered a frame-up to destroy the movement, was dependent on the testimony of a ten year old boy. In 1976, this witness and others admitted they had been paid to lie.

In spite of mass protests and repeated appeals, the state courts refused to reverse the conviction and give the defendants a new trial.

Finally, under pressure from the U.S. Department of Justice, Governor Hart reduced the sentences. This reduction made Chavis eligible for parole on January 1st and he was released early for Christmas.

Reverend Chavis is still on parole. The conviction is still on his record. He and the other defendants will continue to challenge the convictions.

Who says there are no political prisoners in the US?



Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: Here we go again

By N. Fungai Kumbula

For seven long years the two sides fought a vicious silent war, a war whose main characteristic was the absence of open confrontation. At the outset, the "better armed, better equipped, better trained, better disciplined and better manned" Rhodesian army was supposed to blow the guerrilla threat "to smithereens within a matter of days." The whole thing was supposed to be one big joke.

At the conclusion of the war last week, no one was laughing. The joke had turned out to be such a serious disruption of Rhodesia's "white paradise" that as much as 20 per cent of the country's white population had been forced to flee. Over 21,000 had been killed, the economy had ground to a halt, the war was costing the regime in excess of a million dollars a day, the government's civil administration in the outlying areas had long since crumbled, 90 per cent of the country was under martial law and as many as 50 per cent of the people had been forced from their homes. Only South Africa, supplying \$50 million for the war effort and as much as two battalions, had kept the Smith-Muzorewa regime afloat. The joke had suddenly become all too serious.

The African effort, for its part, was not entirely without casualties. Combined with the toll on the bat-

tlefield was the effect of the war on the economies of the Front Line states of Botswana, Zambia, Angola, Tanzania and Mozambique. Not only did each of these countries have to feed, house, clothe, arm and provide training facilities and sanctuary for the freedom fighters but they also had to cope with the influx of refugees fleeing the war. This had the effect of draining the meager resources of these fledgling nations. Added to that also were the all too frequent "cross-border raids" directed first by the Smith regime and later by the "good" bishop.

The international community was very slow in coming to the aid of these Front Line states. Their economies could not continue to absorb such pummeling to the solar plexus. The populations of these countries, deprived of most common everyday necessities as salt, sugar, corn, toilet paper, began to get very restive. Zimbabwe thus became a hotly debated issue in Zambia's last election. Should Zambia continue to sacrifice for the liberation effort even as her people were dying?

Compounding this problem even further was the election of the new Conservative government in England headed by Margaret Thatcher. Before coming to power she had vowed she would recognize the illegitimate Muzorewa government

that had been installed six months previously. The outgoing Labor government of James Callaghan had steadfastly refused to do so until the Patriotic Front of Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe had participated in any elections that resulted in the formation of a government for Zimbabwe. The PF had boycotted the elections that were held last April because they withheld so many privileges for the white minority.

At the annual Commonwealth prime ministers' conference held in Lusaka last July, the African countries mounted a spirited challenge to Thatcher's Rhodesia policy and she was forced to back down. Instead of recognizing the Muzorewa regime and lifting trade sanctions as she had said she would, she ended up promising to invite the warring parties: the Patriotic Front guerrilla alliance and the Smith-Muzorewa regime to London for talks. These talks would center around the drawing up of a new constitution that would be more acceptable to the Africans but would continue to reassure the whites.

On this note, the conference ended. Next stop was Lancaster House in London for the proposed conference.

Next week we too shall visit Lancaster House and see: "WHO'S FOOLING WHO?"

1979 A Mixed Year

by Vernon Jordan

1979 began with a stunned nation trying to understand the mass suicides in Jonestown and it ended with an angry nation concerned with Americans held hostage by Iran, in gross violation of international law and any standards of accepted diplomatic practice.

In between came twelve months of continued hardships for poor people, some important gains for minorities, and some setbacks as well.

Perhaps the most important plus in 1979 was the Supreme Court's *Weber* decision. Especially after the disappointing result of the *Bakke* case the previous year, *Weber* brought fresh hope to millions.

In its decision the Supreme Court upheld an affirmative action plan condemned by some as an unconstitutional quota system. The Court's action gave a big boost to affirmative action just when it looked as if it might be swept away by the rightward tide.

The Court also laid down some ground rules on what makes an affirmative action program acceptable. Since those rules are consistent with every such program I've heard of, the outlook for progress on this front is bright.

The *Weber* case takes on greater importance since it came against the backdrop of continued high Black unemployment and a predicted

recession that may yet inflict heavy damage on Black workers.

That recession, now starting, was deliberately engineered to curb inflation. It's the old story -- you beat inflation by damping down the whole economy. If people lose their jobs, why it's only a temporary inconvenience. They'll be back at work when the recession ends and inflation will be under control then. It's a small price to pay for controlling inflation.

Well, that kind of thinking is all wrong. Not only does it make the poorest people pay the greatest price for controlling inflation, but it won't work. In the seventies, we've had both high inflation and high unemployment, and there's no reason to expect conventional economic policies to work now.

The nation's economic problems may be a factor behind the withdrawal of support for minority rights and for the rise of fringe groups like the Klan. When the economy is expanding, the majority isn't worried about competition from minorities. But in hard times, everyone takes a "me-first" attitude and sees justice for others as a personal threat.

That's also part of the reason for the disarray of the old civil rights coalition in the seventies. The last and most devastating blow to the coalition came in the summer, when Andy Young's resignation from his post as UN Ambassador led directly to increased tensions between

Jews and Blacks.

Young's departure from the Administration set off shock waves of anger in the Black community. It has still not been fully explained to most people's satisfaction.

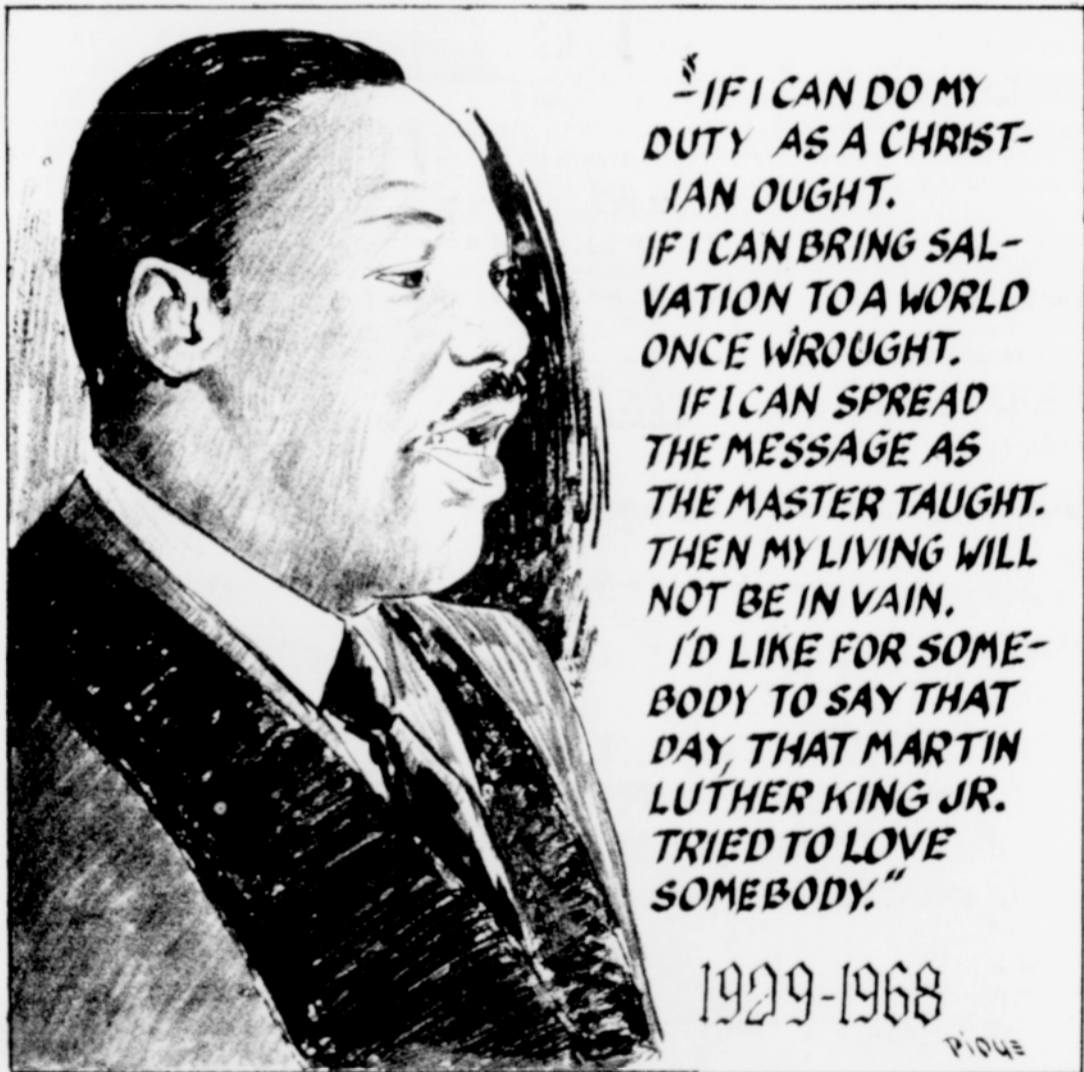
But the immediate effect was to intensify friction between Blacks and Jews, since Young's resignation came in the wake of his meeting with a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Long-smoldering resentments about numerous issues broke to the surface and the groups are now engaged in dialogues to try to reestablish their past partnerships on behalf of civil rights.

In a way, the break may have been healthy in that it provides a basis for realistic coalitions based on each group being completely aware of the other's position. Sometimes a fractured bone, when it heals, is stronger than it had been before. Both Blacks and Jews will benefit from a healed, reconstituted creative alliance.

For most minorities, 1979 continued as a year of hardship, high unemployment, high prices, eroding conditions. Discrimination continues to be an integral part of our society, and there were few signs of any renewed national commitment to the ideals of equality that once were so important to so many Americans.

That's a sad commentary on a year that could have been a lot better.



Letters to the Editor

Age discrimination still City policy

To the editor:

Recent occurrences within City government pertaining to age discrimination point out several issues which the public should be aware of.

Commissions, such as the City-County Commission on Aging, are appointed to provide government officials with information which will aid them to make intelligent decisions. For quite some time the CCCOA has tried to obtain City support for the abolition of all age related restrictions on hiring as they pertain to city employees, including

Police and Fire Departments. The City has chosen, in this instance, to ignore our suggestions and instead, chosen to pay \$47,000 of your tax money to study an issue which one of the CCCOA's committees could investigate for much less.

Had the Council made one phone call to the CCCOA they could have avoided a law suit for age discrimination in hiring and they would have been informed about Michigan Judge Patricia Boyle's July 30, 1979, judgement restraining the City of Allen Park, Michigan from discharging any police/fire officer at age 57 or a recent suit

against United Airlines concerning mandatory retirement for pilots.

Our investigations would have also reported other decisions which have had some effect upon hiring issues in relationship to the elderly.

We suspect there will be a ruling in the present case that will make Portland but another precedent in the continuing battle to prevent discrimination because of race, color, religious beliefs, sexual preference or AGE.

O.J. Gates
Executive Director, CCCOA

Will USSR unite Iran and US?

To the editor:

Politics and national interests make strange partners, e.g., after World War II, our hated enemy Japan became our ally while our big ally, Russia, became our number one foe. Couldn't that happen likewise with Iran now our hated foe by joining us against a common enemy, the USSR, as it now tries to take over the reins of Afghanistan? While the USA and Iran are at odds with one another, these odds aren't

as big as their odds versus the USSR and possibly could be reconciled in a unity against it? So here too politics could make some very strange partners, namely Khomeini and Carter joining forces against a much bigger danger.

The way we've been acting against Iran out of blind passion and vindictiveness, more harm than good happened--e.g., Oregon alone lost millions in trade while the USSR used the occasion for invading Af-

ghanistan. We have to learn that discretion is the better part of valor and that whom God would destroy, he first makes mad. We must consider that in some respects Khomeini was trying to do for his country what say, G. Washington was seeking for his country, namely "independence," etc. In England's sight, Washington was a devil somewhat as Khomeini is in the esteem of the USA.

Paul Brinkman, Jr.

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