



By Larry Baker

Behind the Walls

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Cell Talk

By Asmar Abdul Seifullah
(aka Joe West # 40404)

The word is out...STRIKE, STRIKE, STRIKE.

But this time it is not the inmates who are doing the shouting or threatening the state and public with such actions, it's those employees who are non-line staff working in the prisons under the Department of Corrections. Those employees work in industries, education department, prison culinary, counseling department and clerical offices pools. Such a strike would not affect employee's positions who are hired as guards or work in security.

The deadline for a strike is June 16, 1980.

So coming from an inmate's point of concern, one would have to go no further than to open a manual on Policy and Procedures of the Corrections Division governing "employees work stoppage" and it's all laid out in black and white. The same manual governs inmates conduct.

Procedural Statement Governing Work Stoppage. "It is the policy of the Corrections Division that essential services to the public and to those who have been committed to the Corrections Division's care and custody shall be continued with the least possible interruption, in the event of a work stoppage by employees.

In the event of a work stoppage, those incumbents in the positions identified on a roster maintained by the Corrections Division Central Personnel Office, will provide the services to assure continuance of those services deemed essential by each affected functional unit manager."

Well, that's pretty plain and simple. It means things around the Oregon State Penitentiary will go on as normally as can be expected with maybe a few minor changes, if any.

The major concern of the inmates is would such a strike constitute a "lock-down?" This correspondent posed the question to Harold Whitley, Chief of Security at O.S.P. "Definitely not," was his answer of assurance.

"This is a dispute between employees and management and in no way will I have the inmates suffering by it," indicated Whitley.

This correspondent went to the office of another security unit manager who stated the same thing. In fact he went one step farther saying, such a strike would give him the opportunity to gather some of the inmates who worked in the plumbing shop and put them to work in the cell blocks fixing all them up to a tee. Another unit manager stated that it would be like the old days, when the inmates cooks ran the kitchen with only a couple of stewards for supervision, instead of ten stewards we have today tripping over one another, trying to find something to do. An inmate followed by stating, "Good! maybe more money will go back into the food pots, instead of salaries."

The State of Oregon and members of two local unions have been locking horns over the past year in negotiation of a new contract involving higher wages and more benefits. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) which involves about 220 clerical and support employees at the penitentiary and the women's prison wants open-end inflationary pay increases, but the State contends such a contract can be negotiable with guards and employees, but not with non-security personnel, since guards are prohibited from striking and non-security employees are not. They believe they should receive whatever wage increase the guards get just because they belong to the same union. Even though there has been an arbitration ruling, agreeing with the union, the state has appealed the ruling and wants the courts to rule.

The employees had three options upon the State's appeal. (1) try to coach the State back to the negotiation table, (2) proceed through the courts, (3) STRIKE. To threaten the State with a strike when there are other options open, is a very childish move. It is this correspondent's opinion after questioning many of the employees who work at this prison who would be affected by the strike that they are not fully aware how the strike decision materialized.

Governor Vic Atiyeh has assured the employees that he will not be tolerable of any of the prison employees who do go on strike. Behind

The Walls applauds the Governor's decision for the simple reason there are other peaceful options open. Today, employees who work in Oregon penal institutions are receiving good wages compared to the "yester-years." A guard's starting wage is \$1,030 per month, plus all kinds of benefits. There are lots of people standing in unemployment lines who are just as qualified to do some of the striking employee's jobs and would be thankful just for the opportunity. And since these jobs are equal opportunity positions, I would expect to see lots of minorities heading in this direction. I'll bet you ain't no picket line going to stop them. Not if they got children to feed and bills to pay in this day and age.

The reason this correspondent is calling this so-called strike silly and childish is I am setting an comparison to what would happen if we the inmates "threatened" the State with a strike every time we wanted a fifty cents raise. One would think employees of a prison would be setting an example that the inmates could follow in getting grievances answered.

I hope the families of the inmates feel a little more secure after reading this week's column, because this strike mess is not going to affect us in any manner. In fact, the inmates are acting real cool about the prison's employees dispute and many of those I have spoken with are not going to let any employee intimidate them. The inmates will not be used this time in the news media as before by trying to make the public think that the inmates are going to become unmanageable just because a battle is brewing between prison employees, management and the State of Oregon. And "Behind The Walls," will publically expose any employee who intimidates any inmate by trying to make believe we are going to suffer a big lock-down by a prison union strike.

(Editor's Note: This article indicates the position of the writer only, and not that of this newspaper. The Observer believes in the right of employees to organize and to strike, and opposes those who "scab" by working or taking jobs from employees who are on strike.)

Originally when the column "Cell Talk" began it was agreed that the space for "Cell Talk" would be used to air the grievances and opinions of the Black inmates incarcerated in Oregon State Penitentiary. It was also agreed that this column would be used to exhibit some of the talent and skill that lies dormant behind these walls and is entombed in the madness that prison infests in all prisoners.

As of this date many of the things that "Cell Talk" started out to do haven't been done. It's not that there aren't grievances, opinions and talents that need airing but that Black prisoners inside O.S.P. are reluctant to go on record as to how they feel about the system. It's necessary that the community understand that prison is a fearful situation at best. Fearful in that freedom is the ultimate goal of all prisoners and they are very leary in expressing anything that will be used against them when the time for parole comes around. They hesitate in speaking out because the system really doesn't allow for freedom of speech.

What I mean to say is that everyone is accountable for their own actions and deeds. One way or the other we all have to pay our dues and the dues collectors have a way of drawing retribution from those who openly advocate and express alternatives to the system. If the things that are being said in "Cell Talk" are thought provoking then those people who write in it can become a threat to the system. Personally I would hate to spend one extra day behind these walls because of the stand that I've made but then that's a personal problem that I can handle.

What I hope to accomplish through this particular article is to generate some interest in the community in support of "Cell Talk" because if the community doesn't support "Cell Talk" I'm afraid that it won't continue. There are always forces at work to prevent the truth from being told. Your letters are needed if this type of direct contact is going to continue.

If you have any comments about

"Cell Talk" that you would like response to, please address a letter to *Uhuru Organization, 2605 State St., Salem, Oregon 97310* or call 378-2446 between 8 & 9 A.M. or 1-2 p.m. on weekdays. I will personally answer any and all letters and I would like to include as a part of "Cell Talk" some articles that answer the questions that any member of the community might want answers to. Also in behalf of *Uhuru*, as the Co-ordinator of *Uhuru*, I would like to invite any member of the community to attend a *Uhuru* general meeting. This invitation includes Black and white people alike. This would be an excellent opportunity to dispell some of the myths that are perpetrated about Blacks and prison.

Through interaction between Black inmates and the community through "Cell Talk" and through the community visiting *Uhuru* we can eliminate some of the fear that now consumes Black prisoners.

Brothers incarcerated in O.S.P. need contact and support no matter how small. Prison is a very lonely place and there are people out there that can combat this loneliness. There are bad people and good people confined in this prison, it's the good that we should all be concerned about. Drop a letter of support to the editors of the *Portland Observer* in support of "Cell Talk" and think about getting involved in the war that Blackmen are waging behind the walls of O.S.P.

A little support now may prevent a crime next year. It might even help some brother on the road to rehabilitation. A man is still a man even if he wears a number across his chest and when you're a Blackman with a number, it's stamped into the core of your soul.

May Allah bless and protect the believers and may we all someday become believers in something positive.

\$\$\$ RAISE YOUR INCOME \$\$\$



BECOME A FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDER (IN YOUR HOME)

WHO: Persons receiving assistance from Adults & Family Services and are WIN eligible.

WHAT: Trainees will be required to attend 4 training sessions a week, 4 hrs. a day (9 am to 1 pm.) for 4 weeks. Children two years and older may participate.

WHERE:

AMA FAMILY DAY & NIGHT CARE
1425 NE Dekum 285-0493

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION contact Kaye or Sue at 285-0493

Mt. Olive OES holds Annual Session

The Twenty-first Annual Session of Mt. Olive Grand Chapter Order of The Eastern Star, affiliated with the M.W. St. Joseph Grand Lodge, Ancient Free and Accepted Mason of Oregon, will begin June 16th thru June 21, 1980, with all meetings held at the Hall on N. Fremont and Mississippi.

Sunday, June 15th is St. John's Day. Worship will be with Morning Star Baptist Church, 106 N.E. Ivy St. at 11:00 A.M., Rev. Lee Author Madison, pastor.

Monday, June 16th, the opening session will begin with a memorial service for all deceased members. All sessions will begin at 6:30 with registrations.

Saturday, June 21st, 7:00 p.m. Annual Banquet and Coronation at the Red Lion Motor Inn, Jantzen Beach. Scholarship awards will also be given. The public is invited to the banquet to help recognize students who will be going on to further their education.

All members are urged to please be present and on time.

Linnie R. Carter, Grand matron; Mabel Davis, Grand Secretary; Levan Johnson, Grand Master; Thelma M. Sylvester, Assc. Grand Master; Valco Buffington, Grand Patron; Napoleon Jelks, Assc. Grand Patron; Julia Garter, past Grand Matron and Grand instructor.

YMCA begins day camp

Summer day camp at the YWCA begins on June 16 with camps in five locations within the Portland area. There are two programs in the Downtown area, one in Beaverton, one in the Southwest area and one in Northeast Portland. The program continues through August 15.

The YWCA program is designed for parents who are in need of full time day care during the summer months. Payment is on a weekly basis so children may be enrolled for one week at a time for the whole summer. "It is very flexible," says Paul Nelson, coordinator of the program. "We want parents to know that whenever they need day care throughout the summer, the YWCA has a city-wide program that is ready and waiting for them." The cost of the program is \$30 per week. The day begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 5:30 p.m., giving parents time to get to and from work.

The program is for children between the ages of 6 to 12 and there will be one counselor for every eight children. The program will feature a variety of arts and crafts, swimming and recreational activities. Weekly trips outside of the city are planned as well as bus trips within the city. For all the weekly field trips the YWCA will utilize its own bus,



Summer's here! And time for day camp...

visiting various state parks that offer recreational opportunities for the children. For trips within the city the Tri-Met system will be utilized. Says Nelson, "We like to use the local bus system as much as possible because it encourages independence and teaches children

(Photo by: Lorraine Stratton) how to get around the city by themselves. We want to emphasize all the advantages of city life and give children a taste of everything that is available in a city like Portland."

For more information on the day camp or to register children, call the YWCA at 223-6281.

The House Of EXODUS

Alcoholism Educational and Treatment Center

1518 N.E. KILLINGSWORTH
PORTLAND, OREGON 97211

284-7997

FROM THE FRONT DOOR

BY TOM BOOTHE

From the front door, I was asked to compare the qualities of a WINNER, to that of a LOOSER. I agreed to do so. The following is my opinion.

The quality of a winner is simply the will to succeed by consistently putting forth his/her best effort. The comparison is as follows:

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|--|---|
| 1. SUCCESS equals (Consistent best effort) | 1. FAILURE EQUALS (Lack of best effort and consistency) |
| 2. HAPPINESS equals YOUR best effort | 2. MISERY equals lack of best effort |
| 3. HEALTH equals YOUR best effort | 3. SICKNESS equals lack of best effort |
| 4. WEALTH equals YOUR best effort | 4. POVERTY equals lack of best effort |
| 5. MONEY equals YOUR best effort | 5. LACK OF MONEY equals lack of best effort |
| 6. RESPECT equals YOUR best effort | 6. DISRESPECT equals lack of best effort |

One must understand that everyone succeeds and everyone fails from time to time. The important thing to remember is the selection of activities in which one performs.

Try to perform and give your best effort to activities that are constructive, productive and beneficial to yourself and the people around you. There are a great many people who have succeeded at becoming non-productive citizens, these persons have selected activities that are not beneficial to themselves or the people around them. These people go on to become confirmed LOOSERS or FAILURES, and FAILURES, are MISERABLE, they are sick, they are POVERTY STRICKEN, they never had enough MONEY, and they are DISRESPECTED by persons around them.

On the other hand there are those citizens who have selected activities that are productive and are beneficial to themselves and to the people around them. These persons go on to become confirmed WINNERS or successes and these successes lead to HAPPINESS and happiness leads to HEALTH and health lays the ground work for WEALTH and wealth brings MONEY and money brings RESPECT and respect lays the groundwork for other SUCCESSES.

Remember that you can be a WINNER IN LOSING activities, and be looked upon as a loser; or you can set your sights upon constructive, productive good and positive things that will benefit yourself and the people around you, and become a WINNER OF WINNING activities, and become known and respected as a WINNER, without saying a word.