

EDITORIAL/OPINION

We can be thankful

What do we have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving? Although there are many reasons to be alarmed and discouraged, there are still reasons to be thankful.

We can be thankful that we have enough to eat -- while much of the world is starving.

We can be thankful that we have peace in our part of the world -- although we are in serious danger of being drawn into war in Central America and in the Middle East.

We can be thankful that we have a country that still has ideals of freedom and justice although the goals have not been reached.

We can be thankful for many simple things that we never think about except at Thanksgiving.

The students of Boise Elementary School, as outlined in their newspaper *Boise Speaks*, are thankful for many things:

- Lisa: I'm thankful for being alive.
- Jackie: I'm thankful for life itself
- Nervan: For being smart.
- Arden: For eating blackeye peas and hard corn bread.

- Henry: That I have a family.
- Dena: I'm thankful for friends.
- Ericka: School, clothes, mother, brother, sister and father.
- Michael: For playing football
- May: Being here.
- Evette: Everything
- Joey: Thanksgiving
- Jesse: For Summer
- Anna: The zoo and the Enchanted Forest
- Alica: When my mother hugs me
- Al: When I play with my friends.
- Tad: When the stars come out
- William: The sun.
- Susan: For the friends at Boise
- Travers: For having a model home
- Rip: For having food.

- Jocelyn: For having a home.
- Richard: Being smart.
- Koau: Cookies
- Xou: For Chicken
- Say: Being in America, a home, for that fact that my family is here, school

Workers neglected

Governor Vic Atiyeh is to be commended for having the courage to establish Black and Hispanic Commissions after they were twice rejected by the Legislature for political and racist reasons.

Although the Governor favored a minority commission, he allowed a citizen committee to hold hearings in the Black and Hispanic communities and followed the overwhelming public desire to have two commissions.

The Governor also broadened his selection process to include people who have not served on all the usual boards and commissions. We have long protested that the same few are repeatedly chosen.

The one area in which the Commission on Black Affairs is not represented is the private work force. Most of the appointees are employees of government and schools, one is an employer, the others professionals.

The common, 8 - 5 working person is neglected. There are no representatives of the skilled and unskilled workers, craftsmen. There is no union representation.

Employment is the key to economic independence, and the private sector is still the employer of the majority of workers. The worker is the person who makes the economic system -- and the political system -- function, but too often is forgotten when the decisions are made.

The Commission would have been stronger had it had a representative of the workers -- the area in which most Black people find themselves.

Time to speak out

The cartoon below, from *Hustler* magazine, is an example of the overt racism that is being demonstrated in this country.

Although racism has always been at large, it has become more blatant and more visible during the past months, much of it fostered by the national elections. Along with the rise of the Klan and the Nazis all over the nation is the publican of racist items that would not have been tolerated a few months ago.

In an era of deepening recession all over the world, the needs of the poor at home and abroad are being ridiculed and obscured.

We can only hope that the new president will soon speak out against these activities because his implied consent through silence will only lead to disaster.



"We thanks the Lawd fo' food 'n' sex, but mosely fo' dem welfare checks... Amen."



And then there were three

By Fungai Kumbula

Quietly slipping out of bed, she puts on a crimson bathrobe and tiptoes across the room. On the far wall is a ZANU calendar with a picture of Comrade Mugabe, Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. Executing a cute little bow, Mrs. Mandinema Kumbula crosses off another day. As the rays of the early African sun peek over the rolling eastern hills, she steps out into her well kept flower garden for her morning ritual: tending to the flowers while drinking in the cool, clean, crisp, clear African air.

For the umpteenth time, she goes over in her mind the Big Day, October 24, 1981. It is a day she has dreamed of for so long and a day she has never dared hope to see. She has seen a lot of life this uncrowned African princess; she has seen a lot of heartache, a lot of despair, a lot of deprivation, but also a lot of love, a lot of laughter, a lot of joy and a lot of happiness. As she picks up stubborn bits of crab grass from among her flowers in the early morning sun, she remembers...

On a hot Friday morning in October of 1964, she stood at the bus depot gamely fighting back the tears that threatened to come cascading down at any moment. She was bidding farewell to the first of her children to fly the coop. Second son and second born Tendayi was leaving for Zambia and Tanzania on his way to the United States to further his studies. These studies had been cut short by the then racist, white minority regime of Ian Smith.

Barely a year later, first son Ziyomo decided that he had had enough of home life and left to go set up on his own. For a family that had been so close, this was quite a bitter pill for Mother to swallow but, this was only the beginning.

June 1968, first daughter and third child, Ruwadzano, got married and moved to Zambia with her husband. Now the floodgates had really opened. January 1971 Rumbidzai, second daughter and fourth child, left for Zambia on her way to England to complete her nursing studies. At each departure, Mother is still biting back the tears. Kwanza 1972, she was again saying "Bye" to yet another son. This time it was Fungai who was leaving first for Botswana then Zambia and, finally, Los Angeles where he briefly studied pharmacy.

There was still more to come. Younger brother, Musekiwa, followed almost on his heels, leaving in November 1974, first for Mozambique and then Tanzania where he joined the liberation forces. In 1976, he left to come to Los Angeles to enter college. Less than six months after Musekiwa left home, younger brother, Farai, also decided to follow him and join the fighting forces in Mozambique. Since the last two did not bid her a proper farewell due to their special circumstances, Mother was spared the agony of another tearful parting but, when she found out later, however, it still was not an easy situation to accept.

Where once there had been ten children, now there was only three and the big rambling house suddenly looked too big and empty. Every once in a while she would get a letter from some distant shore saying, "Mama I'm alright," and maybe there would even be a picture enclosed. For her part, even after all these years, she still worries about whether her children are eating right and getting their proper rest.

As the political situation in Zimbabwe steadily deteriorated and civil war engulfed the nation, she despaired of ever seeing her brood again. With stunning suddenness, however, Zimbabwe became an independent nation and despair turned to caution, caution to optimism, optimism to hope and hope to ecstasy! The family reunion was going to become possible after all!

Mrs. Kumbula pauses in her reverie as she hears the front door open and her husband of thirty-five years, Sengerwe, step out. They exchange morning pleasantries and both settle down to the serious business of tending to the garden. Of course, the topic of conversation

is the imminent return of their scattered children. They have now received firm commitments from all seven children as to when they are returning hence the plans for the Big Day.

They walk among the trees each of which was planted any time a child left home. October 24 was picked because it will be marking a full SEVENTEEN years since the first of the seven children, Tendayi, left home. On that day, the humble Kumbula residence will be hosting an educator-journalist-author (*Tendayi*), insurance expert (*Ziyomo*), bank loan officer (*Ruwadzano*), psychiatric nurse-midwife (*Rumbidzai*), medical biologist-biochemist-*Portland Observer* African affairs editor-TV commentator (*Fungai*), public administrator-journalist-TV news editor (*Musekiwa*) and army officer (*Farai*).

There will be a party, the first party ever in their simple household and also the last one since they will be moving to a bigger and better residence shortly afterwards. The family is back together again and, in the course of partying they may even get to sing "We Are Family." Mandinema and Sengerwe Kumbula they worked so hard to give their children a start in life. Now they can sit back.

My father has always reminded me of those rocks on the seacoast. They can get battered by the waves but it is the waves that have to retreat; the rocks stand there as defiant as ever. My mother is more like the young sapling that bends with the wind but snaps right back up when the winds die down. Whenever times get rough, I always remember these parents who have weathered storm after storm after storm, and given us so much love, so much guidance, so much direction, and so much of themselves. There could be no greater parents anywhere in this world.

As the African sun bathes the eastern hills in fiery gold, Mom and Dad walk away arm in arm, reminiscing...

Presidential election reconsidered

Part I
By Manning Marable

The circus is over at last. After all the campaign rhetoric and misinformation, after the cynical promises and political posturing, the 1980 presidential race is history. A lackluster electoral choice between three "Republicans" - Carter, Reagan, and Anderson - alienated and frustrated the overwhelming majority of voters. Ronald Reagan was the selection of the public - the choice of less than 28 percent of the eligible voting public. The large margin of Reagan's victory is not a political statement representing a shift to the right, but a rejection of Carter's record of ineptitude, duplicity and administrative chaos.

Reagan's election, however, is merely the sorry continuation of the badly bungled, antihumanistic policies and practices of a near-moribund political system that historically rewards the owners and managers of corporate wealth at the expense of the poor and working classes of every ethnic group. Nothing has changed with Reagan's victory: the chains that fetter our people to an existence of permanently high unemployment, inadequate medical care, poor housing, and crime would be as secure as if Carter or Anderson had won instead. The problem for our generation is not to decide who will run the plantation, but whether we will organize to uproot the plantation, burn it to the ground, and build a newer, democratic order which advances the material interests of our people.

Thousands of Black people have concluded that the central crisis in American politics is not that the selection of candidates is so poor. The real problem lies not with personalities, but within the very definition of American politics itself. No one seriously believed the statements of politicians during election campaigns. No one really believes that the democratic charade called electoral politics has a decisive effect upon those forces within the centers of multinational

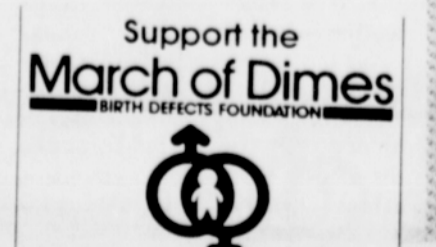
capital and finance that actually determine significant issues within this system. As one Black Philadelphia resident, 22 year old Charles Adamson, recently complained in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*: "I voted since I was 18. Man, I couldn't wait to pull the ballot. But I've given up on the politicians. They just ain't doing the job."

The remarkably low voter turnout in this year's Presidential election illustrated at least three significant points. First, the majority of Black people expressed no confidence in Carter, Anderson and Reagan, neither as individual candidates nor for that body of politics which they represent. Second, Black people rejected the "boogy man thesis" propounded by Carter spokesmen like the Reverend Jesse Jackson and Andrew Young, which claimed that Carter was the "lesser evil" and that any Black non-voter was actually voting for Reagan. The reality of our political situation was that the Negro Old Guard's backroom politics of petty patronage could no longer persuade the majority of Black voters to cast aside the experiences of four hard years of benign neglect at the hands of the Carter Administration. And third, many Blacks were implicitly declining to participate in a process that has ceased to have legitimacy as a way to decide things affecting public policy. In short, the very rationale of the electoral system was on trial. That system was accused of operating against our interests as a people no matter which lever we pulled on the Presidential line in the election booth. And a majority of Blacks decided, privately and publicly, that this system was found guilty as charged.

Black America must organize collectively, both internally and externally, to place on the public agenda a more progressive set of priorities in domestic and international policy. Internally, we must develop Black United Fronts to build bridges between existing progressive political groups throughout the nation, facilitating

greater dialogue and closer programmatic unity. We must build consumer and producer cooperatives providing critically needed food and clothing to our people. Externally, we must raise serious questions in Congress and statehouses across the country about the patterns of divestment of capital which throw tens of thousands of Black and other Third World people out of jobs every year. We must renew our demand for the passage and implementation of the comprehensive health care legislation proposed by Congressman Ronald Y. Dellums of California. We must mobilize our families and friends to demonstrate in the streets against the climate of racist terrorism against our communities, as graphically illustrated in Buffalo and Atlanta.

The election of one candidate or another to the Presidency in any given year does not decide the ultimate goals, directions and/or necessity of the Black Freedom Struggle. The members of the National Black Political Party Steering Committee believe that the ultimate struggle for Black, Third World, and oppressed people is that struggle for complete social transformation and self determination. We believe that the great Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass was speaking to our current political plight when he declared that "power concedes nothing without demand; it never has and it never will." We believe that there will be no hope for the masses of Black people in America until such time that they assume final responsibility for their own emancipation, and that they reject any efforts to compromise their historic battle for full economic democracy, political and cultural equality in America.



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Bruce Broussard
Editor/Publisher

Portland Observer

The *Portland Observer* (USPS 959 680) is published every Thursday by Exile Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

Subscriptions: \$10.00 per year in Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the *Portland Observer*, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

The *Portland Observer* was founded in October of 1970 by Alfred Lee Henderson.

The *Portland Observer* is a champion of justice, equality and liberation; an alert guard against social evils; a thorough analyst and critic of discriminatory practices and policies; a sentinel to warn of impending and existing racist trends and practices; and a defender against persecution and oppression.

The real problems of the Black population will be viewed and presented from the perspective of their causality: unrestrained and chronically entrenched racism. National and international arrangements that prolong and increase the oppression of Third World peoples shall be considered in the context of their exploitation and manipulation by the colonial nations, including the United States, and their relationship to this nation's historical treatment of its Black population.

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