

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Racial abuse law necessary

Across the nation racial harassment and abuse are escalating. Racially motivated murders and violence are increasing. Oregon is not unique - the same type of abuse is increasing here.

Governor Victor Atiyeh is proposing state legislation that would make race-related vandalism and abuse a felony with penalties of up to five years in prison and \$12,500 in fines. Intent of the legislation is to make the penalties as strong as we can possibly make them," Atiyeh said. Currently these activities - which range from vandalism and cross burning threats and intimidation - are prosecuted only under the harassment or criminal mischief laws which carry a maximum penalties of six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

We strongly endorse this legislation. But in the meantime federal legislation does exist - which has not been used locally - under which individuals can be prosecuted for denying the civil rights of others.

Putting a few offenders in jail might inhibit their continued act of violence and cause others to contemplate their actions.

Bob Lamb, director of the U.S. Justice Department's Community Relations Service, recently suggested that human relations commissions provide training on racism and race relations to public officials and decision makers.

We recommend the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission take on this task and

that it receive the extra funding necessary. We suggest that the press be the first - the publishers and editors who set the policies and decide what the public will read.

Considering Oregon's high incarceration rate of Blacks, the legal system should be close behind. Many of the judges demonstrate a complete disregard of the racism in their courts and, at best, most are unaware of the forces acting against minority defendants. Even the prosecution could benefit with a little education.

All city and county officials - Commissions and agency heads, - and the union representatives, should be included, along with state and federal administrators working in this county. Also the School Boards, school administrators and principals. And there is the private sector.

Many believe a racist cannot be changed through education and that is probably true - racism is a social pathology and cannot be erased until the system that causes it is changed. But there are many well-meaning persons who practice racism because it is part of our culture - it is learned behavior - and many of these people would change their overt behavior if they were aware of the misinformation it is based on.

In our country the education system and most of life's experiences teach and re-enforce racism. At some point we have to begin exposing and explaining this mis-education and beginning a new process of education.



Uganda

By Fungai Kumbula

Uganda: Nine years ago, President Apollo Milton Obote, Uganda's first president since the country gained independence from England nine years previously, was overthrown by one Idi Amin. At the time, Obote was in Singapore attending the annual Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference.

His long-time friend, President Julius Nyerere, of Tanzania provided him sanctuary and, for the next nine years, Obote stayed in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, as Nyerere's guest. The world pretty much wrote him off. About two years ago, however, Obote's successor, Amin, excesses began to gall even those who had chuckled with glee when he overthrew Obote.

A national movement to liberate Uganda which had started years earlier began to gather more support and to actively set about the task of bringing about Amin's downfall with renewed vigour. Within the space of about six months, the indomitable Idi Amin Dada found himself on the outside looking in: a combined force of Tanzanian soldiers and Ugandan nationalists

had done to him what he had done to Obote. Amin fled into exile and is now reported to be living in Saudi Arabia.

Meantime, the havoc he had wreaked behind continued to plague Ugandans with the result that the country was soon plunged into near-chaos. As a first step towards returning the country to normalcy, elections were slated first for September and then postponed to the first week of December 1980. Milton Obote was one of the candidates running for President. Last week, nine years after he was ousted and eighteen after he first assumed the post, Obote was sworn in as Uganda's President.

His party, the Uganda Peoples Congress, won 66 of the 126 Parliament seats and, Obote thus became the only man ever to be returned to power after being overthrown. He has a humongous task ahead of him though, because resurrecting Uganda from the shambles left by Amin will be about as tough as the reconstruction of Zimbabwe. Hopefully, President Obote will meet with the same suc-

cess and cooperation that his counterpart, Comrade Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe has met with.

Upper Volta: "What goes around comes around," one of my American friends once said to me leaving me totally perplexed. The meaning finally dawned on me when I started to write this week's news stories. The above is a case in point and so is this one.

In 1966, Sangoule Lamizana staged a military coup that toppled the then government of Upper Volta. After 11 years in office, Lamizana decided the time had come to return the country to civilian rule. So, in 1977 he allowed elections to be held and he was returned to the Presidency but now with the blessing of the Volta electorate.

On November 27, 1980, one Colonel Saye Zerbo, commander of the armed forces in Ougadougou, the capital, decided he too wanted to be president. So, he staged his own coup against Lamizana accusing the latter of economic mismanagement. We'll just have to wait and see...

Christmas reflections

By Nathaniel Scott

In this Christmas season, let's stop and reflect upon the nature of Christmas and just what it really means.

Christmas is a religious holiday that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, a prophet and son of God.

According to the Holy Bible, Jesus taught and performed many miracles, while here on Earth. After his death, it has been said that he appeared to many, in one form or another.

So we are talking about a most sacred and important occasion, celebrating a most divine person.

We are talking about an occasion, honoring one who taught and practiced goodwill towards all men, regardless of race, creed or color.

We are talking about an occasion, honoring one who taught that we are all equal and that we should love and respect the rights of each other. Among other things, this man Jesus, in whose memory we are celebrating this holiday season, taught that we are all brothers and sisters.

So in essence, we are celebrating the representation of peace, non-discrimination, the right to pursue

our cherished dreams and the right to feel secure within the knowledge that we are no better, or no worse than anyone else.

Those are the facts, as I understand them. But man is a curious animal. To satisfy his moods, selfishness and greed, he changes many things to his satisfaction and preaches a lot of things that he doesn't practice.

Injustice is the greatest calamity facing mankind today. Oppression is a world wide disease. Inconsiderate consideration is that which has bred more destruction than any other cause down through the pages of history.

We cannot infringe upon the rights of others and practice brotherly love at the same time. We cannot hold anyone in servitude and slavery and say that we want others to treat us as we wish to be treated. We cannot deny the freedom and choice in any manner, be it housing accommodation or educational facilities and say that we are just people and believe in equality. No, we can't do those things.

The pages of history are filled with just and honest people who have tried to show through words and deeds, that all of mankind is of one race. To name but two of these

enormously important individuals is Jesus Christ of Nazareth and Martin Luther King of Alabama. In one way or another, they met a senseless and violent end.

I hope you are still thinking about what I am saying because I want you to remember that in times of troubles, trials and tribulations, these individuals didn't give up.

In June and the dog days of August and September, I want you to remember Christmas. In the Fall, when autumn leaves start to fall, I want you to remember Christmas. In the Spring when the showers descend, I want you to remember Christmas. In the Winter, when snowflakes fall, I want you to remember Christmas. In the summer, in the midst of heatwaves, I want you to remember Christmas.

And when you are remembering, I want you to remind each and everyone that we not only celebrate Christmas day, but also the Christmas season.

For those of you who have had the chance to read my articles, as well as those reading my writings for the first time, my wishes are: a joyous and prosperous life, and whomever waves the banner of Black pride and culture, is working for the betterment of the whole.



Letters to the Editor

Commissions composed of "Safe" people

To the Editor:

Not long ago, you made the observation that the newly created Black and Hispanic advisory commissions excluded regular 8 to 5 working people. In your editorial you criticized this exclusion. And rightly so.

However, I feel that more needs to be said and done. First of all, your readership should be informed that a Governor such as Victor

Atiyeh is very prone to stack commissions with "safe" people who speak the language of the elite - and who don't rock the boat (which usually means that they are largely ineffective). Secondly, these "safe" people then turn out neat looking reports and studies loaded with the latest and most popular jargon, which are then put away somewhere to gather dust.

Finally, I believe the *Observer* can

perform an important service by keeping watch on these new commissions - and informing its readers just what, if anything, has actually been done in the first three months, six months, etc. Perhaps in this way you can prevent the "normal" from happening, wherein what seems to be progress and accomplishment is really nothing more than a cruel bureaucratic con-job.

Earl D. Jelneck

Portland Observer

The *Portland Observer* (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exie 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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Bruce Broussard
Editor/Publisher



Christmas at Oregon State Prison

By Larry Baker

I would like to tell you about a Christmas story - an unusual but true Christmas story. A story that will linger in the minds of a number of Black prisoners caged nightly in multi-colored dim lighted cells.

A group of Black prisoners belonging to a prison activity club "Uhuru" were allowed to gather to share two hours on December 19, 1980 in the Christmas spirit, with Maranatha Adult Choir and the Talking Drum Dance group from Portland.

Nancy Crust

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In Germany now for several months, Nancy Crust is a Quality Assurance Specialist assigned as a Procurement Representative at the Telefunken plant. Her job includes resolving problems, training and assisting in the development of their Quality Assurance program.

Some of Crust's equipment involves a situation display console, electronic command signal processor, a magnetic drum group, a printer reader group and a data processor functional group operator's console.

Maggie Morrison, a Portland sister of Nancy, is understandably proud of her "baby" sister's ability. Nancy married Charles Crust, her boss at Boeing. He is proud of Nancy's appointment, too, but hopes for the assignment to be of short term, "due" he says, "to the lonesome condition of her husband."

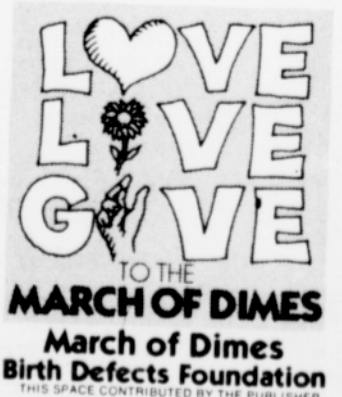
The couple plan to spend Christmas holidays together: "somewhere in the Caribbean."

As I listened I was saddened by the thought that most of the Black prisoners were not able to attend because of a rule restricting the room's capacity. Both Black groups had traveled fifty rain-drenched miles at their own expense to let these prisoners know they are not forgotten this Christmas. Those fifty miles can seem like five thousand at times if you are a Black prisoner housed at the Oregon State Penitentiary, and have a family living in Portland. Any form of communication has its value in the search for mental escape from discrimination for Black people.

I said this would be an unusual story, because it has a sad, but true ending. I over-heard one white correctional officer state to another: "Let's herd these guys (Black

prisoners) back to their cells, now that their "jungle bunny" party is over."

I quickly recaptured reality and lost all Christmas feeling of "Peace on earth and goodwill toward men."



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