

EDITORIAL / OPINION



The guns of Zimbabwe

By Fungai Kumbula

Citizens participation: Portland style

Was the City of Portland's true interest in citizen participation revealed in its public hearing on the federal Community Development Block Grant Tuesday evening?

The hearing was held in the office of the Planning Commission, on Southwest Alder and Broadway. Aside from the severe parking problem in the center of the City, the room was too small for the number who attended the City wide hearing.

The Chairman repeatedly mentioned the obvious - that the room has extremely poor acoustics making it difficult to hear.

The hearing is required by the federal

government and is supposed to provide a voice for the citizens in spending the \$10 million. If input is really wanted - there certainly should be a more adequate place to hold the meeting. Even City Hall would have been preferable.

For five years citizens have attempted - in vain - to have a say in how this money, designated for poor neighborhoods, is spent. But the City goes on its way, disregarding the citizens, often disregarding federal rules. It is the same old story no matter what pot the money comes from - CETA, EDAC, etc.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

There was an article published in last week's paper pertaining to "Oregon Blacks and the Republican Party" written about Mr. Thomas Kennedy. I would like to point out that I support his freedom of choice to join any political party which he desires. But when he uses the term "we have done some progressive things in the area of human and civil rights" referring to the Republican Party, one has to wonder is Mr. Kennedy one of those who has been disenfranchising Blacks and other minorities all these years. If the Republican Party program is as progressive as Mr. Kennedy points out, I am sure this will be encouraging to our many minority job seekers who have been or will be out of work due to Republican conservatism. This is not to say that the Democratic Party is any better, but

the Republican Party has just started recruiting minorities with semi-open arms.

I also support Mr. Kennedy's contention that the Republican Party intends to eliminate welfare fraud, but I hope his statement is not inferring that Blacks are the major recipients of welfare checks. I also take offense to his statement that the "free lunch" is over. I might note that since my birth and my forefathers before me have not received anything free in this country, (but hell). Anything Blacks have received, which Mr. Kennedy referred to as a "free lunch," has been paid for in blood.

One other note, and I quote, "first we have to analyze our position in this country, then we have to change our behavior patterns as they relate to saving money and reinvesting in our com-

munities." This must be some kind of joke. In the context which the statement is made, I find it non-relevant since most of our people are out of work or in low-paying jobs and don't have the necessary capital to reinvest into the neighborhood to bring about the kind of economic stability which is needed. Short money has to look for the best buy for the dollars available.

It is good to note that Mr. Kennedy can stimulate the Black community's economy with his purchase of haircuts, shoeshines, clothes cleaners, and other penny-ante purchases. These items won't build nest eggs for reinvesting capital. What we need is well-paying jobs like Mr. Kennedy has and all those that think as he does have, and then we can also talk sh...!

Sincerely,
James Loving

To the Editor:

If there hadn't been a picture accompanying the article "Oregon Blacks and the Republican Party" one could have easily mistaken Thomas Kennedy words to be those of any right winged conservative who believes that one of America's most troublesome burdens is "Black people."

For example (quote): "You can describe the predicament of Blacks in the 80s like a basketball player coming to a football game with the wrong uniform to play. We are playing the wrong game and should learn new ones very fast. We as Blacks must prepare ourselves because this country is becoming more competitive." (end quote)

Here, we find Kennedy painting a picture of blindness, stupidity, and an inability, on the part of Black people, to understand what is happening with America. It is very apparent that Kennedy is not a student of history, or of modern day

politics. History will reveal that it is not "Black people" who are playing the wrong game, but the American government. It's an ancient game that first involved the invasion of Africa, the introduction of slavery to the Americas, using primarily Black people. It's an ancient, updated game involving almost 700,000 unemployed Blacks (the figure will go higher as Reagan cuts deeper into our lives), racism that involves the killings, murders and sometimes torture of Black people, poor education (it was just a moment ago that America, in her high court, said ok, we'll allow Blacks to eat with us, or frequent our schools etc), police attacks, the freeing of Klu Klux Klansmen in a court of law, and on and on. Not for one moment have Black people been misled, as far as, what kind of game we should be playing. From the moment we set foot on the shores of America, our has been a "struggle for survival and freedom."

Kennedy blames Black people for

their economic misery and makes it seem like our entire existence in America has been one of "welfare" and "band aid" programs. Not so. Blacks have engaged in the every aspect of the building of the American economy; ranging from inventions to carrying the weight of corporate racism, as it relates to factories, plants etc. Blacks are a viable part of the American work force, and I don't believe for one moment that most Blacks wouldn't work, if they had the chance. Black exclusion from the economic structure of America was by design, not accident! and until there is economic equality, most Black Americans will never feel that America is "their piece of the rock."

Thomas Kennedy is playing the wrong game, for the wrong reasons, using the wrong methods, directed toward the wrong people. He owes the Black people of this community an apology.

Nyewusi Askari

To the Editor:

In reference to your February 12 article, "Oregon Blacks and the Republican Party," it is very disheartening to read where any Black person says "the free lunch is over" when describing persons who have few resources at their disposal. As a matter of fact, "the free lunch" is not distributed in abundance to African-Americans in Oregon, but when stated by a Black person, the majority community of Oregon probably thinks he or she is talking about their own people.

Based on what the Republican Party has represented in recent years from the African American perspective, use and abuse Black folk whenever necessary, its Black party members (as long as they do and say as expected), are really the ones getting the free lunches while the rest of us starve. Apparently, those same Blacks are philosophically somewhere out to lunch, when talking about getting your own and perhaps protecting it with your life? Such thinking is contrary to a way of life as practiced by Black folk long before some Republican Party

came into existence, i.e. mutual work based on sharing with a political, cultural, social, and economic commonality.

Your well-written article clearly exposed and forced one to wonder why Black Republicans never have the same problems as Black non-Republicans: unemployment, poor housing, poor education, and a sense of belonging. Obviously, they know how to survive, but at what cost?

Sincerely,
Ben Priestley

The guns of Zimbabwe were blazing again last week but this time they had a more sinister ring to them. Casualty figures vary depending on who you listen to but they range from a hundred to two hundred dead and an unspecified number wounded. Death is always a tragic occurrence but it is all the more tragic when it is so totally unnecessary. The above tragedy is supposed to be the fallout from the "demotion" of one Joshua Mqubuko Nkomo, leader of the minority ZAPU (Zimbabwe African Peoples Union) in the coalition government of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe.

Nkomo, whose party garnered 20 of the 100 seats in last February's elections to Mugabe's ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) 57, was initially offered the position of Minister of Home Affairs. Dissatisfaction with his performance and a barrage of citizens' complaints led to his being moved to the less powerful post of Minister Without Portfolio earlier this month. Knowing that he has to weed out inefficiency during these early stages or Zimbabwe would soon be plagued with an unwieldy and impossible bureaucracy, Mugabe has not hesitated to act against friend and foe alike. In the same cabinet shake-up, ZANU secretary-general and Manpower Planning Minister, Edgar Tekere was relieved of his cabinet duties ostensibly also because of dissatisfaction with his performance.

Apparently, this past week, ZAPU guerrillas who still owe their loyalty to Nkomo rather than the government of Zimbabwe, staged a rebellion aimed at eventually overthrowing the government. The guerrillas have been housed just outside Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city in a government effort at returning them to the general population. Far from accepting this obvious government

gesture of goodwill, these malcontents used the opportunity to further undermine the young nation's recently and democratically elected government.

Twice in recent months, they have instigated armed conflicts forcing the government to send in its own troops to restore order. These rebels in essence used civilians as a shield and shot those that refused to cooperate. In the end, the civilian casualty rate was higher than that of the combatants; just what the rebels wanted so they could charge the government with an attempted genocide against the Ndebele, the Bulawayo area residents who all along have thrown their support behind Nkomo.

In their latest terror campaign they went even further and brought in tanks in addition to, a barrage of light and heavy automatic weapons. This time it was an out and out insurrection and the plan was to capture Bulawayo and use it as a launching pad for the eventual capture of the whole country. In spite of all the reconciliation efforts of the government, apparently, the thinking in some of the inner ZAPU circles is: "What you cannot get through the ballot, you get by the bullet."

Anxious to minimize bloodshed, the government made repeated appeals to the rebels to lay down their arms and again reminded them that whatever grievances they had, there was legal avenues to which every Zimbabwean now had recourse. The rebels responded by just blazing away at the approaching government troops. In the end, Prime Minister Mugabe, who is also the Minister of Defence, ordered the troops in to restore order. As the death toll mounted, Mugabe ordered in the Air Force to overfly the battlefield. Only when these Air Force of Zimbabwe jets were flying directly overhead and poised to swoop any second did the rebels surrender and sullenly return to their barracks.

The damage was already done. In spite of its best efforts at restraint, the government has been forced to restore order by force. The dead could not be brought back to life and the government's reconciliation efforts had been dealt another serious blow. As before Nkomo and other high ranking officials deny any complicity in the uprising. These denials ring hollow when one recalls that the rebellion was staged in the name of Joshua Nkomo; in an unsuccessful effort to replace the current Prime Minister Mugabe with none other than Nkomo.

Now the government is trying to move all ZAPU guerrillas away from the Bulawayo area back into the bush from whence they came. The idea is to take them away from the populated areas and into the open country where, if they should cause any more mischief, the government will move in swiftly and decisively. The government now realizes that it is dealing with honest-to-goodness insurrectionists whose avowed aim is to overthrow the government. These rebels have already done untold harm to Zimbabwe and, as was to be expected, the international media was quick to swoop in and exploit the "tribal divisions; the inherent distrust between rivals Mugabe and Nkomo and all their other favorite themes.

Moving the rebels has hit one early snag in that the mass transit drivers asked to drive them out of the city have refused. Understandably, they say they fear for their lives. The government has decided to wait until the rebels were out of the populated areas before disarming them.

Probably the worst thing to come out of this sad, long episode is that from now on the government may begin to show a stronger and more decisive hand in dealing with its critics. One bad apple may not spoil the whole barrel but the odor it gives may be so bad the taster cannot afford to check.

Outlaw racism in USA

(Continued from Page 1 Col 6) rights, in terms of projecting and forwarding their objectives, that any decent person or society should respect. On the contrary, their proposals and aims are so repulsive, false and anti-human that allowing them to promulgate those ideas is a disservice to real freedom and wellbeing."

It is agreed that the right to free speech does not include the right to cry "fire" in a crowded theatre, he continues. "Then how can there be a right of freedom of speech to declare all Jews implacable aliens to social order with foul motives and varietal satanic agents fit only for burning and to declare all colored people as immutably inferior mentally and morally to white people and fit only for servitude."

"The force of this question is intensified when one bears in mind that this is not a theoretical question but rather one posed on a historical record, and a recent one at that, within an ever more crowded theater, that is to say, the globe. It is as though it meant the death of the sheep, or argued for the right of the slave owner to continue enjoying his peculiar property in the name of his right to do so...or insisting on his freedom, or anyone else's freedom, to urge the enslavement of Black people."

It is absurd to abolish slavery and allow its advocacy. It is not only absurd; it is viciously dangerous to do so - and both Nazis and Kluxers insist that servitude to whites is the proper status for Black people.

"The rationalization for slavery was racism. There is no more reason to tolerate racist argumentation in the name of freedom than to tolerate the enslavement of Black people in the name of the freedom of others to possess slaves."

When Nazis carry signs saying "Kill a Jew" or "Gas all communists" - that is not a manifestation of freedom, it is a manifestation of a backward society where such people come into existence and where such messages are tolerated in the name of so-called freedom. All of this is not a matter of theory or a matter of some insane group picketing a meeting, this is a matter of an outlook of racism and anti-semitism which resulted in oceans of

blood and torment of hundreds of millions of people. And what is being explicitly advocated is a repetition of such activity.

"To permit the promulgation of such poison in the name of freedom is absurd and vicious."

In the U.S., the KKK was in power in a dozen states, a quarter century after reconstruction. It conquered states like Oregon, Colorado, Ohio, Indiana, in addition to southern states in the 1920s.

The Nazis conquered Germany and most of Europe only 40 years ago. They rule today in Chile and South Africa. There is again a Hitler cult in West Germany and there is a rise of a Nazi movement in this country.

"We are defining the so-called right to free speech for those who have an outlook and a movement that led to the death of 50 million people, and which almost conquered the world, just the other day historically speaking...and which right now is in power in significant nations on two continents."

"We have witnessed in the past months the murdering of 15 Black men in Los Angeles; the killing of 6 Black men in Buffalo; the killing of two Black men in Utah; the shooting of Vernon Jordan; the murder by KKK and Nazis of five people in Greensboro, North Carolina, and their acquittal; vicious KKK harassment of Black families in Contra Costa County 20 miles from San Francisco; KKK candidates for Congress on a Democratic ticket in California and a Republican ticket in Michigan; defacement of cemeteries, schools and synagogues by Nazi gangsters in New Jersey and California; KKK officials teaching Boy Scouts how to kill in Texas; a training camp for Nazi and KKK members called "Camp Mai Lai" functioning in Alabama. These are examples of the national resurgence of these criminal groups.

Combating racism is not censorship. It is one form of effective struggle against the censorship that characterizes our society today. True censors are those that have hidden the true history and culture of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Indians,

etc.

Many nations have laws forbidding racist writings. Great Britain makes criminal language which insults other people in racist terms. In the Netherlands, the penal code states: "Any propaganda or organization based on the theory of superiority of one race or group of persons of one color or ethnic origin with a view to justify or promote racial discrimination, hatred or abuse, or any act of violence or incitement against any person or groups of persons by reason of or reference to religions, racial or ethnic affiliation shall be considered an offense against society and punishable under the law..."

In 1972 France passed a law making it illegal to incite race hatred or discrimination. Most socialist countries outlaw racism.

The Postdam Agreement outlaws Nazi activity in Germany, but this agreement has only been enforced in East Germany - the German Democratic Republic. In West Germany, Nazism is again flourishing. Nazis are active in England, Spain, Italy, West Germany and South America, and their leaders have met with the leadership of the Klan and the Nazis in the U.S.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 especially condemned discriminatory practices and urged such practices be eliminated. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the UN in 1966 provides that "any advocacy of national racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement, discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."

The resolution adopted by the UN International Conference on Human Rights in 1968 says: "The peoples of the world must be made fully aware of the evils of discrimination and must join in combating them. The implementation of this principle of non-discrimination...constitutes a most urgent task of mankind at the international as well as the national level. All ideologies based on racial superiority and intolerance must be

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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 minority 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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