

EDITORIAL / OPINION

Get involved; know the facts

The nation is moving rapidly -- and its direction will be determined either by the citizens or by those who control it by default.

A depression is upon us -- the signs are all around. High unemployment rates; "tighten-the-belt" cut-backs, at least for the poor; efforts to strip workers of their rights through destruction of unions; movement of companies abroad to make use of cheap labor. High inflation; high interest rates; tight money.

Along with this declining style of life, comes crime -- particularly street crime and crimes of violence. To meet this threat, police actions are strengthened and civil rights restricted. Facism is the ultimate result.

We have seen this happen all over the world; will it happen here? The national and state budgets are an indication that it could. So is the recent decision to bring the FBI more closely into local police work, the effort to dismantle the Freedom of Information Act, the move to strengthen and secretize the FBI/CIA and make surveillance of American citizens easier, the attempt to make demonstrations illegal, the move to restrict press freedom.

Congress and the national government seem a long way away, out of reach, but they do sometimes repond when political expedience beckons.

Closer at hand is the State Legislature which daily reviews legislation of crucial importance -- the racial harassment bill, the Black and Hispanic Commissions, South Africa divestment, changes in Civil Rights Bureau rules, changes in criminal law; budgeting for education, welfare, health and other needed programs; taxation. These decisions will be made whether the citizens participate or not.

The Legislature is nearby -- only an hour away. Our elected representatives are as close as the telephone. Yet many of us never bother to find out what is going on and never express an opinion.

The City and the County are also facing difficult decisions -- the County is entering its budget process; the City is grappling with Housing and Community Development grant proposals, CETA funding, economic development, etc. The School Board is slashing budgets and getting ready to close several schools.

We urge the people of our community to get involved before it is too late.

We also invite you to our Legislative Brunch, held every other Saturday morning at Bourbon Street at 9:30 p.m. This Saturday, meet Representative Hardy Myers, Speaker of the House -- the man who makes committee appointments, assigns bills, and gets things done in the House. It's your chance to tell him what you want -- and what you don't want.

Who will suffer?

With its massive increase of military aid and its deployment of additional U.S. advisors to the military government of El Salvador, the United States is taking another rapid step toward another "Vietnam." Even the same rationale is being used -- the need to stop communist (Soviet Union, Cuba, etc.,) intervention in Central America.

The excuse to continue the Vietnam War, a war whose disasterous effects are still felt in the American economy, was the "domino theory." This theory said that if one Southeast Asian country fell -- all would "go communist."

The same story is now heard about El Salvador. "If El Salvador falls into the hands of the communists, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, and even Mexico will follow."

This theory completely overlooks reality -- that the United States created and maintains a brutal military dictatorship. This "government" has slaughtered over 12,000 civilians in the past year, with U.S. weapons training and guidance.

The U.S. "government" is risking the destruction of all the world to save this government from its own citizens. Those observers who have been to El Salvador -- including leaders of the church and social agencies -- say in truth this "government" does not exist. The military is in full control of the country and a broad coalition of workers, students, peasants, professionals and business people

are trying to overthrow the military and to establish a democratic system.

But in the face of opposition of Canada, Mexico and most of Europe, as well as many South American nations, the United Nations, the World Council of Churches, the U.S. goes ahead aiding this illegal government.

Why? There are no vital economic interests or strategic defense interests in El Salvador. The people of El Salvador are being massacred because the U.S. government fears that the fall of a dictatorship in El Salvador would inspire their neighbors in Guatemala to rise up against their oppressive dictator. And Guatemala has oil!

As the people of the United States sit quietly and let the President send them to war they should consider some questions: Who makes up a large percentage of the Army and the Marine Corps, the troops that will fight in El Salvador? Who will suffer when money should be used for housing, employment, and medical care goes to buy napalm and bullets to kill innocent people far away?

Can the U.S. go through the political divisions, the economic losses, destruction of the youth that it suffered during the Vietnam War? If we are not concerned about the people of El Salvador -- the poorest in the Western Hemisphere -- are we concerned about our own children and ourselves?

LUTHER



By Brumsic Brandon, Jr.



Traitors sentenced to death

By Fangai Kumbula

Victorious FRELIMO forces marched triumphantly into Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, almost six years ago. As their supporters ululated, danced and sang in the streets to mark the birth of a free nation at last, the hated Portuguese flag came down to be replaced by Mozambique's proud, revolutionary Red, Black and Green. This marked the end of almost five hundred years of Portuguese colonial exploitation.

Since then, Mozambicans have settled down to the serious business of rebuilding their shattered economy, divided nation and the rest of all that it takes to be a truly independent nation. Along the way, Mozambique watched with great satisfaction and joy as Zimbabwe was born. The birth of Zimbabwe, her western neighbor, signalled further consolidation of her hard won independence. The Ian Smith regime, then in power in the then "Rhodesia" had been in the habit of staging cross-border raids into Mozambique in a vain effort to destabilize the new nation.

All is well in Mozambique, it would appear but, unfortunately, that is not the case. Mozambique, like any other country in similar circumstances, has not been able to escape the scourge of that most hated of all "beings" that lowest of the low; the traitor. Some people

call them "dissidents" but in Mozambique's case, that would be misleading. A small group of malcontents, unhappy with the fact that FRELIMO was able to save Mozambique from the thores of colonial exploitation and win the respect of not only all Mozambicans but the world as a whole, have kept up a trickle of anti-government activity throughout the last six years.

Little bands of these traitors, working hand in glove with Rhodesia, Malawi and South Africa, have joined into a terror group know as "Africa Livre" which, ironically, translates to "Free Africa." They have attacked outlying villages, mined roads, killed government officials, spread anti-FRELIMO propaganda and, generally, done whatever they can do to undermine the national government. The government has therefore been forced to deploy forces to patrol the border areas and hunt down these renegades in an effort to protect the lives and property of Mozambican nationals.

Thirty-one members of this renegade group went on trial the first week of November accused of treason against their own country. Four were sentenced to death and the other 27 received prison terms ranging from eight to fifteen years in prison. The military tribunal, in passing sentence, remarked on how

sad it was to be meting out justice against people who are, theoretically, fellow Mozambicans but went on to emphasize that the severity of the crimes left the tribunal with no choice. Enemies of the people will be dealt with, and severely too. This should serve as a warning to any and all who may be contemplating such nefarious deeds.

Since the independence of Zimbabwe and the initial steps towards the creation of the Economic Community of Southern African States of which Malawi is a member, relations between Malawi and Mozambique have improved quite some. Malawi may therefore soon deny these turncoats the sanctuary they have enjoyed for so long.

Shortly after the new government of Zimbabwe assumed office in Harare, the capital, Zimbabwean and Mozambican officials met to plot a joint strategy for eliminating this menace once and for all. With their allies, fellow conspirators, planners, financiers, trainers and bosses; (Smith and Muzorewa) toppled in Zimbabwe, these traitors were forced to flee to Malawi and South Africa. Under the unpredictable leadership of Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi has been one of the sanctuaries where these traitors fled to when FRELIMO came after them in pursuit.

The second Martin Luther King

By Dr. Manning Marable

Last month many millions of Americans, Black and white, paid tribute to the life and thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. Almost 20,000 people attended a major march in Washington, D.C., urging Congress to make King's birthday a national holiday. I was invited to speak on the contributions of King to the Freedom Movement at a convocation at Florida State University.

We remember the long marches that Martin Luther King, Jr., led against the segregationist in Albany, Georgia, Montgomery, Alabama, and Cicero, Illinois. We can imagine the nights he suffered in jail to defend our rights to attend white universities, to be hired on our merit, to live where we wanted. Martin is important, because we as a people are important. His sacrifices were ours; his struggles for international peace in an era of war is our own; his message of nonviolent activism and passive resistance in the light of injustice and race hatred is his legacy for our day.

But we must remember that Martin was a man. He made mistakes; sometimes he was right and sometimes he was not.

What distinguishes Martin Luther King, Jr., as truly great was the potential within each one of us, to overcome our own weaknesses, to grow in understanding, to attempt to live life with a quiet dignity in the face of adversity. That also is Martin's legacy.

Many speeches were given throughout January in honor of Martin, demanding government action to create his national holiday. The great majority concentrated on the years between the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-56 and the Selma, Alabama Protest March of 1965. Most depict the "highpoint" of Martin's career at his March on

Washington, D.C., address in August, 1963.

There is another Martin, however, that many people fail to remember. In 1966, 1967 and 1968, King broke with the Johnson Administration on the Vietnam war. He began to move in the direction of Malcolm X, by moving from civil rights to human rights.

After his failure to integrate the Chicago neighborhood of Cicero, King began to make public statements which conflicted with the stated goals of the majority of his followers and the civil rights hierarchy. "For years I labored with the idea of reforming the existing institutions of society, a little change here, a little change there. Now I feel quite differently."

The experiences of defeat in Chicago and his disillusionment with the morality of white America had made King much more interested in economic reform and nonviolent social transformation. "I think you've got to have a reconstruction of the entire society and revolution of values," he declared. At the barest minimum, this would have included the rebuilding of the cities, the nationalization of some industries, a critical review of this country's foreign investments, and a guaranteed annual income.

Like members of the New Left, King first expressed his new views on the need for comprehensive social change in his stated opposition to the Vietnam War. King had privately opposed America's involvement in the War since the early 1960s, and had written against the War since 1965. However, his Civil Rights activities had taken him away from his direct effort to cooperate with the Peace Movement. King's decision to incorporate the Civil Rights Movement with the movement to end the war was supported by A.J.

Muste, a leading American pacifist, Dr. Benjamin Spock, and Yale University Chaplain William Sloan Coffin.

Thus, on April 4, 1967 King spoke at New York City's Riverside Church to an overflow crowd about Vietnam. In this speech which received nationwide press coverage, King officially broke with the Johnson-liberal-integrationist-pro war coalition. He stated: "The Great Society has been shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam." America had to reach a negotiated settlement which recognized the humanity of the Vietnamese people. "It would be very inconsistent for me to teach and preach nonviolence in this situation and then applaud violence when thousands and thousands of people, both adults and children, are being maimed and mutilated and many killed in this war; so that I still feel and live by the principle. Thou shalt not kill."

The next stage of domestic civil rights struggle, King implied, had to address itself to international questions of war and peace. On April 15, 1967, King led a demonstration of 125,000 pacifists through Central Park to the U.N. to denounce America's participation in the Vietnam War. During the parade a group of seventy white youths burned their draft cards and Floyd McKissick and Stokely Carmichael (now Kwame Toure) spoke against the genocidal tactics of the war. By the end of May, in Geneva, he called again for the negotiated settlement and enunciated a five point peace plan, which included: an end to all bombing in North and South Vietnam; a total ceasefire; and end of military buildup; recognition of the National Liberation Front; a date set for all U.S. troop withdrawals.

End of Part One.

Portland Observer

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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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