

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Influence in unity

One thing that came out of Tuesday evening forum on legislative reapportionment is that although there has been discussion of this issue for ten years there is still much confusion and hesitation about the issue involved.

The question is whether citizens living in the old Model Cities area, the area now included in the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, and containing the major part of the Black citizens, should be placed within a legislative district. The other option is to place portions of the area within their separate districts - districts that do not necessarily have much in common with this area.

Having a legislator elected by and responsible to this community would enhance the feeling of community forged by the years the neighborhoods have worked together in Model Cities and the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods. Perhaps many of those who have given up on the electoral process would want to become involved.

The theory behind dividing the area is that it would provide an opportunity - if not to elect - at least to influence three legislators. The community could be a deciding factor in a close election and those legislators, even though their major support was outside the area, would have to respond to community issues. This is basically the plan that has been followed for the past ten years.

If the community were divided in the manner now proposed by the legislature, there would be little opportunity for the election of a Black. They would find themselves running against Howard Cherry, Wally Priestley, Jane Cease or possibly Jim Chrest. In recent years Carol Bryant and Harold Williams ran against Cherry without a ghost of a chance; Evie Crowell did well in Black precincts but utterly failed in the eastern end of the district.

On the other hand, many recent candidates - Nick Barnett, Herb Cawthorne, Carol Bryant, Jim Loving, Robert Phillips - would have done well and probably could have won in a district encompassing the area where those with common goals and concerns live.

A second advantage of the forum is that it brought the reapportionment issue out of the

closet and into the open. Unlike the people of Bend who learned their City is to be divided into two districts at a legislative hearing in Salem, the people of the community have an opportunity to discuss and respond to the proposals.

Representative Glen Whallon, Chairman of the Elections and Reapportionment Committee, will hold a formal legislative hearing on April 30th, 7:00 p.m., at the King Neighborhood Facility to receive public testimony. The legislators who will make the decision are each trying to protect their own territory, but the community does have an opportunity to influence their decision.

Support Jordan

We commend Commissioner Charles Jordan for his action in firing the two police officers involved in the "possum incident." This action is unprecedented in this City and will have its political repercussions.

Jordan also has said that he will "shake-up" the police department in response to admitted criminal activity and lack of adherence to proper procedures by police officers. He said he will rid the Bureau of officers who are not doing their job and of "bad influences." Although the people of Portland want a good police force, this is a highly emotional issue and major changes will bring protest.

We call on Commissioner Jordan to release all available information on both investigations - the narcotics squad and the "possum incident." Only by revealing all the facts - names, dates, places - will the citizens be allowed to regain trust in their police force. Until the names are revealed, all police officers are suspect. Until the names are revealed, those arrested or convicted on the testimony of officers whose word and judgment cannot be trusted are in jeopardy.

As much as is possible, citizens must be brought into the process - they must be involved in setting policies, monitoring activities and reviewing complaints. Otherwise the police Bureau will continue to be a law unto itself.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Brother Asmar's April 16, "Cell Talk" prompted me to write.

Asmar, your words were touching ones, deserving of an award for graphic description of a very real situation, and though your hungered need cannot be satisfied, sedated or appeased by words, I, an ex-offender, presented the following to the Oregon legislature in behalf of the representatives of "Cell Talk."

"Today, I would like to address House Bill 2998 and encourage the passage of it.

Conjugal visits (family visits rights) can, and will be, a giant step in lowering the state's recidivism rate; its institutionally made criminals; and, one of its mandated purposes, rehabilitation. Contrary to information which is to be released the latter part of this year, conjugal visits are wholesome, effective and a deterrent to recidivism.

Psychologically such visits would establish stronger family ties, re-establish self-worth, which will accomplish one of the major problems a number of confined persons have.

We, the taxpayers, you and I, and the rest of Oregon's citizens, are in-

directly and directly affected by what transpires within the state's institutions. It affects our pocket books through taxes, levies and bond issues; it affects us financially on a personal level through higher insurance premiums resulting from thefts, vandalism and other criminal acts, and, it affects our emotional and physical stability through worry, apprehension and fear. Yet, we are continuously using antiquated ideas and methods to deal with problems arising out of the most advanced civilization the world has ever known.

The cost of building sites for conjugal visits (family rights) is under attack by some of the state's officials, yet, those same officials are advocating the construction of a new prison that will eventually and ultimately run in the neighborhood of \$150 million, claiming that in the long run it will prove cheaper; which proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the interests of the people are not their paramount concern.

You, ladies and gentlemen, sit at the crossroads. You have it within your power to accept the responsibility of the state in its clear concise spectrum, and either move this

state out of the dark ages (the same as Washington recently did), or continue to subject Oregon citizens to problems without seeking adequate solutions.

I respectfully ask for the approval and passage of House Bill 2998, and, more importantly, I ask that it be viewed as a component of the program needed to reduce recidivism, institutionally made criminals, lack of self-worth, the inability to function in an open and free society, and the need to forever think in terms of men prisons.

In closing, I propose conjugal visits, worthwhile industrial programs that will generate revenue for inmates and state alike, and other programs that will eventually relieve the taxpayers as care-takers and make all of the state's institutions, viable, self-sustaining and worthwhile programs.

Brother Asmar, there are those who care, and I join you and encourage all of Oregon's concerned citizens, to speak out against inhumane and degrading conditions.

Nathaniel Scott

Uhuru Cultural Club and North-West Ex-offender Association



Zimbabwe Anniversary

By Fungai Kumbula

As part of our Get Acquainted With Africa Month, the *Portland Observer's* African Affairs Editor has this week compiled and prepared this special alphabet to familiarize the reader with this fascinating continent. Since not all letters of the American alphabet are represented in the African alphabet, it has been necessary to include the names of a few cities to complete the text. This is the key we shall use to unlock some of the mysteries of the motherland:

S (South); N (North); E (East); W (West); NE (North-East); NW (North-West); C (Central); I (Island); C (City).

A: Algeria (N); Angola (SW); Anzania

B: Benin (W); Botswana (S) Burundi (E).

C: Cameroun (C); Cape Verde (I); Central African Republic (C); Chad (C); Comoros (I); Congo (C).

D: Djibouti (NE) E: Egypt (N); Equatorial Guinea (C); Ethiopia (NE); Eritrea (NE)

F: Francistown (C); second largest city in Botswana

G: Ghana (W); Gambia (W); Guinea Bissau (W); Guinea (W)

I: Ivory Coast (W)

J: Jos (C) in northern Nigeria

H: Hasase - City in Zimbabwe

I: Ivory Coast (W)

J: Jos (C) in Northern Nigeria

K: Kenya (E)

L: Lesotho (S); Liberia (W); Libya (N)

M: Malagasy (I); Malawi (SC); Mali (W); Mauretania (W); Morocco (NW); Mozambique (SE) Mauritius (I)

N: Namibia (SW); Niger (W); Nigeria (W)

O: Ougadougou (C) - capital of Upper Volta

P: Pemba (I)

Q: Que Que (C) - in central Zimbabwe

R: Rio Muni (W); Rwanda (E)

S: Sahara Democratique Republic (NW); Senegal (W); Sierra Leone (W); Somalia (NE); Sudan (N); Swaziland (S)

T: Tanzania (E); Togo (W); Tunisia (N)

U: Uganda (E); Upper Volta (W)

V: Vulindhela (C) in central Azania (South Africa)

W: Wedza (C) in southern Zimbabwe

X: Xai Xai (C) in central Mozambique

Y: Yaonrde (C) capital of Maurelqrio

Z: Zaire (C); Zambia (S); Zanzibar (I); Zimbabwe (S)

With a total land mass of some 11 1/2 million square miles, Africa is the world's second largest continent, second only to Asia. It is more than 3 1/2 times larger than the entire United States of America.

Total current population is estimated at just over 650 million which is smaller than China's and just ahead of India's. Looked at another way, you could fit three and one half USA's into Africa and still have room for Mexico. You could also fit North and South America and a sizable portion of Europe into Africa! Africa also has the world's longest river, the Nile which is over 4,000 miles long; the world's second highest mountain, Mt. Kilimanjaro at over 19,032 feet straddling the Kenya-Tanzania border. One of the world's highest and certainly most majestic falls is Masi-oo-tunya (Victoria Falls) on the Zambezi River which divides Zambia from Zimbabwe. The world's largest desert, the Sahara, over five million square miles crosses north Africa from west to east.

From the Cape, at the southern tip to Cairo at the northern tip, it is roughly 6,000 miles or twice the distance from Portland to New York. From Banjul, Gambia on the west coast to Mombasa, Kenya, on the east coast, it is 5,000 miles. No wonder there are an estimated 5,000 languages spoken in Africa alone! In Lake Tanganyika which is in Tanzania, Africa also boasts the world's deepest lake at more than 4,000 feet deep. Africa is truly an amazing continent, and we are only scratching the surface!

The growth of facism

By Dr. Manning Marable

The victories of the New Right in the election of 1980, combined with the revival of the Cold War abroad and racial prejudice at home, represents a new phase of American politics.

There is a growing concern among the world's progressive and Third World countries, and among the oppressed peoples of this nation, that there is something seriously wrong in the United States. A mood of racial bigotry and social intolerance which generated the neoconservative political thrust in the 1970s is maturing into an ominous and startling political movement for white power. Without exaggeration, many critics of the political scene are describing the new mood in one simple yet devastating word - facism.

Many of us told ourselves that facism was just around the corner during the 1960s. We saw the Johnson Administration's genocidal war in Southeast Asia, and we denounced it as facist. We learned about "Tricky Dick" Nixon's Watergate burglaries, his illegal war into Cambodia, and the development of the COINTELPRO to destroy the Black movement, and we declared that he was facist. We read about Gerald Ford's stumbling, bumbling pardon of Nixon, his cutbacks in affirmative action programs and environmental controls, and some of us called him a facist. We endured four years of peanut-brained schemes and dreams, the revival of the Cold War, and the murder of hundreds of Black women, men and children in the streets of this nation, under James Earl Carter. Some of us called him facist. The term facist was used so often that many people no longer listened. As in the fable of the "boy who cried wolf," many working and poor people were ill-prepared when the real thing began to materialized.

What we must understand is that American facism will not look like anything the world has seen to date. Under a facist regime, no wall por-

traits of the criminal Adolf Hitler will be in view. Mussolini and Juan Peron will not re-emerge. In fact, the formal institutions of U.S. democracy -- the Congress, the Presidency and the Supreme Court - may still exist, although radically transformed. Elections will still occur, commercial television and the media will be broadcasting the same old garbage; the rhetoric of the New Right will be trumpeted from the heights of governmental power and within cultural institutions, but the "appearance" of normancy will still prevail.

Facism is not necessarily *acoup d'etat*, or the overthrow of a formally elected government by the armed forces, as in Chile in 1973. Under U.S. facism, in all probability, not a single soldier will leave the barracks.

Facism, then, must be understood in the U.S. as a covert, rather than overt, transferral of authority into the hands of a very small fraction of racist and capitalist elites. It is the final, desperate attempt of those social forces to maintain their control over the economic and social order, at the expense of constitutional democracy.

The first, and for our purposes, the foremost element in the drive toward U.S. facism, is the steady proliferation of racial violence aimed against every Black person in America, regardless of income, education, or religious beliefs. This is not to minimize or to ignore the level of racist attacks aimed against our people throughout history, since we arrived in chains in 1619. Racist violence is a baseball, hot dogs, and apple pie. Only last year, the leader of the KKK declared that the Republican Party platform could "have been written by a Klansman." Only last year, Ronald Reagan delivered an infamous speech in Philadelphia, Mississippi, the site of the vicious murder of three civil rights workers, that he favored a return to "states' rights" - a favorite code word for white supremacy.

What is new during the last eighteen months or more is the massive proliferation and thinly

veiled legal toleration of white racist attacks against us at every level of society.

Districts

(Continued from page 1 col. 3) strength."

Calvin O.L. Henry also presented a plan that divides the community into three districts with 35 per cent, 8 per cent and 11 per cent Black residents. Henry explained this would "maximize" influence by influencing three district legislators.

Public response was mixed. Linda Johnson said Blacks have been unable to select representatives and this has helped prevent a sense of ownership and involvement. Dr. Darrell Milner said the current split into four districts has not worked, that placing the community in one district should be tried.

Viesia Loving said she never sees her legislator in the community, working on community problems, and would like to be able to replace him.

Reverend Garlington said there is a need for the area to pull together and bring pressure; he wasn't sure how this could best be done. Bob Boyer suggested that if the community were united in one legislative district and have hope of electing a representative, voter participation would increase.

Others expressed a reticence to make a decision without an opportunity to study the plans and the issues. Evelyn Crews asked if the community could have more time. The final plan must be adopted by July 1st.

Rep. Whallon said he would be willing to bring his committee to Portland for a hearing. Other representatives present were Representatives Howard Cherry, Jane Cease, Vera Katz, Wally Priestley, Dick Springer and Senator Jan Wyers.



Bruce Broussard Editor/Publisher

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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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