

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Racism as usual

The Portland School Board continues its usual pattern of discrimination against Black children, their parents and their community and shows strong signs that it will return to its former policy of scattering Black children throughout the district to satisfy its own lip-service to liberal causes.

The board has now extended its territory of discrimination, including those neighborhoods that are naturally integrated. Adams was placed in a community destined to be integrated in what is considered by most liberals to be the "right way" - through housing.

But the school in the naturally integrated neighborhood was placed under constant pressure - its students inticed and forced to go elsewhere - until finally an excuse was found to close it. The people - Black and white - who chose to live in an integrated neighborhood were punished first by the destruction of their neighborhood elementary schools and then the removal of their high school.

While the School Board was talking sanctimoniously about school desegregation and staying one jump ahead of the Justice Department by shipping Black kids here and there, it rewarded the principals of "receiving school" - those who cooperated by taking larger numbers of Black students, protected the staff and programs of their own schools.

One of the most successful was Jackson, which not only eventually received many of the students pushed out of the Humboldt area to Marquam middle school and then Jackson, but which recruited a fair number of students from Boise.

But the students and parents of Jackson - who participated in the largest administrative transfer program, the program promoted and favored by the School Board as its path to desegregation - also were punished. They lost their school, too. Why? To dilute the possibility of a suit over the closure of Adams.

What is the message? To Blacks the message should be clear: there is not and has never been any interest or intent on the part of the Portland School District to educate Black children. Black children have been used like pawns - their bodies sent where they were

needed to fulfill quotas. The money designated by the federal and state governments for their education has been used to intice white parents to use baby sitting services to skew statistics and deceive federal auditors.

Integrated housing? The district's lip service to development of integrated neighborhoods is a fraud. Integrated neighborhoods and naturally integrated schools would defeat their purpose - to keep Black children confined in inferior schools and to offer as their only escape being used to satisfy numerical requirements elsewhere.

Two remedies are open to Black parents: filing a law suit that will find the district guilty of a long pattern of racial discrimination and will place the district under the jurisdiction of the federal courts; bringing all students back to their neighborhood schools and requiring the district to provide schools for them.

The School Board has demonstrated its intent; its intentions toward the Black community are clear. Leaving the education of our children in its hands would be genocide.

## A united front

The NAACP National Convention was an example of an effort toward unity - the leaders of many of the major Black and civil rights organizations were major participants: Jesse Jackson, Mrs. Coretta King, Vernon Jordan, Leon Sullivan. The idea was to go beyond sectarian concerns and petty jealousies and demonstrate a united force to the Reagan Administration.

Locally there is an air of great discouragement. After years of hard work, even the minor gains are gone. Problems with the school district, the police and growing racism cause frustrations and resentment. Loss of jobs and income make the difficulties seem almost insurmountable. It seems we can have little impact on local policies, let alone on the national government and global systems.

It is not a time to give up; it is a time to prepare for a new struggle. And it is time for the community's organizations to get together, make some plans, and throw up political, social and economic barricades beyond which there can be no retreat.



## Organization of African Unity

By Fungai Kumbula

The Organization of African Unity, the OAU, concluded another Summit this past week. Since its foundation in 1963, Africa's Heads of State have met annually and in a different country each year. The host becomes the OAU Chairman for the upcoming year. This obviously is a very prestigious honour and all Heads of state seem to vie to host the OAU. There is a lot to be said for this both good and bad.

The good side is that no single African Head of State becomes permanent Chairman. Secondly, every African country has the opportunity to host all of Africa's leaders except for those still under colonial domination like South Africa and Namibia as well as Western Sahara. Those countries are always represented by the African liberation movements until such a time as a truly representative government is elected as was the case with Zimbabwe, Angola,

Mozambique and Guinea Bissau in recent years. The host country as well as its people also get a lot of attention focused on them as all Africa and the world watch to see what progress will be made. The Heads of State and their entourages also get to visit all these countries year after year and thus acquaint themselves with that country's people and problems.

On the negative side is the expense involved. For some reason, in recent years particularly, the expenses of hosting an OAU conference has become ridiculous. Sierra Leone which played host last year spent in excess of \$100 million for that one week alone. That is an unholy sum for such a small country especially when one looks at her shaky economy. It was rather ironic that at this particular conference, the dominant force was Africa's persistent economic woes. The African leaders were discussing ways to stop the vicious cycle of negative

economic growth, unemployment, malnourishment of various of their peoples, poor health and social amenities and the like and yet for a whole week the leaders basked in utterly sinful opulence. One wonders how many jobs that \$100 million would have created. What a shot in the arm it would have been for Sierra Leone's ailing economy.

Maybe it's about time there was a permanent site for the OAU. Maybe it's about time the splendour and prestige, ostentatious opulence were downplayed so more of Africa's more fundamental problems would be addressed. Maybe the time is not yet ripe for our Heads of State to be housed in 5-star palatial hotels that will be vacant (usually amidst poverty) once the conference is over. Maybe it's time to give up the limousines and return to the VW bugs.

The OAU was created to provide leadership; it can do so in more ways than one.

## Letters to the Editor

Inside/outside: Just the same

Dear Editor:

From reading your column "Cell Talk" I feel that more opinions and evaluations are necessary to inform the general public of the conditions, etc., of the Bilalians (Blacks) here at OSP. First of all, my chosen spokesman is myself and this because I have met no one here better qualified to do so. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you would print what I have to say.

There are no more racial problems here at OSP than there are on the outside, and an unbiased, objective view of the situation here will reveal this. The problems are in the minds of the people here. Most want something for nothing and expect to receive it, and when they don't they complain.

The majority of the Bilalians (Blacks) here will spend an entire day playing dominoes or play acting

pimping, and this goes on day after day. There are approximately five Bilalians in Vocational Training School. Why? Some will say that it takes six months to one year to get in, but it doesn't. Some will say that they're being discriminated against. Maybe, but it doesn't stop a person from getting in. I got into VT School in less than three weeks here.

I was informed by the VT supervisor that they wanted more Bilalians in VT and that I should send any friends interested in learning a trade to him. Upon informing different people about the opportunities in the VT program, some typical responses were: "I already have a trade", "I don't work, what do I need with a trade!", "I'm going to wait until I see the Board (Parole Board)", "My mind isn't right now", or something similar.

The principal Bilalian organization here is the UHURU Club. The

attendance of this club is very low, unless there is entertainment from the outside or a party is near at hand. The participation of Bilalians in other clubs and organizations is the same as for UHURU.

If we were to organize and align ourselves with our fellow inmates regardless of ethnic background, and work toward alleviating the demoralizing conditions here, we would be successful. However, this is not the desire of certain Bilalians here. These certain people talk as if we were in Alabama in the 1960's (incidentally, I was there), instead of OSP in the 1980's. They seem determined to incite a racial riot, which is foolish as well as unnecessary. What ulterior motives lie behind this, I cannot say, but what I can say is that we need to unite and become productive.

Le Artis C. Moore

## War waged on Black children

To the Editor:

The May issue of Black Enterprise magazine published by Earl Graves was devoted to "The War On Black Children." This study was the results of publicity given to the abduction and murders of over a score of Black children in Atlanta. The list is still growing. This incident has chilled the hearts of Black parents throughout the nation. The needless killing of Black children has drawn national and international attention, and has brought to the public a much broader recognition to "The War On Black Children." According to the article; "Lifelong poverty, unemployment, imprisonment, even death by homicide are the enemies." Homicide is the greatest killer of young Black men in the United States. Of Black families with earned income, one in four earns less than \$5000 per year. That has brought children living in poverty total ages three to seventeen, white 11.4%, Black 41.6%, total average 16.0%. Infant mortality propor-

tionate decline in twenty-eight years from 1950 to 1978, white 59.9%, Black 54.4%, total 57.0%. Nearly 78 percent of poor Black children under 18 live in homes headed by women.

In the broader spectrum it is impossible to exclude lack of education and miseducation that have been problems in Portland, highlighted by forced busing over the past ten years. The coalition's report several years ago pointed specifically to the efforts of the Black United Front which gave voice to the community to demonstrate against the problems of education. The closure of Adams and Washington/Monroe amounts to an additional obstacle placed in the future of Black children, another problem in the continuous struggles for "Quality Education." These two schools have the second and third highest Black and ethnic student population in the district, forty-one percent and thirty-five percent respectively. In addition to these disadvantages the future of Black children demands that they be

trained to labor in industry. Black children by in large cannot afford the luxury of education, which is expressed in the English evaluation of education. There is no practical purpose for the future of Black children to be educated to lift their cultural standing. The Black child percentage wise in America must be educated to fill a job. Adams and Washington/Monroe and some others already have existing industrial machines for this purpose. When Adams and Washington/Monroe are closed this equipment will be moved to schools outside the Albina area. And thus Caucasians will reap the benefits of our lost. Portland's Board of Education in its short site and racist attitude will use so call economic problems to add fresh fuel to the war on Black children. The cycle of war on Black children will continue to be a cycle of events. In the words of the immortal Bard a "plague on all your houses."

Rev. John H. Jackson  
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church

## No press coverage of nuclear weapons statement

To the Editor:

I would like to express my disappointment at the press blackout on Senate Joint Memorial 5, the legislature's recent statement calling for a bilateral freeze on the production, deployment and testing of nuclear weapons.

SJM 5 passed the Senate

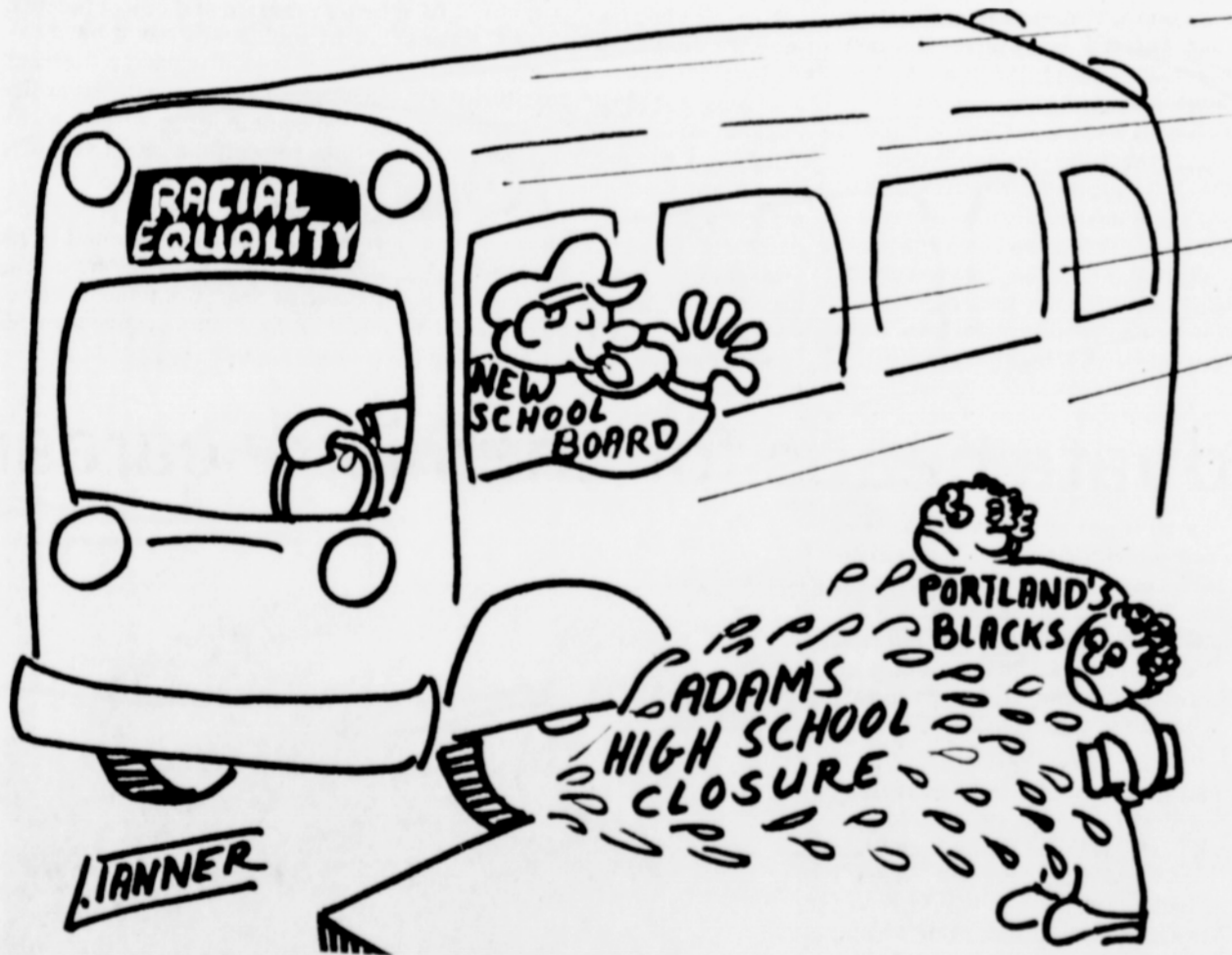
unanimously in April and the House on June 25. It marks the first time a state has taken an official position on the suicidal buildup of nuclear weapons by the US and the USSR, though similar action is pending in the legislatures of Illinois, New York, Ohio, and Massachusetts.

The *Portland Observer* was not alone in failing to report this historic development. I saw no coverage of it at all, although Rep. Dick Springer tells me his office prepared a press release.

I am hoping by writing this letter to give your readers a chance to learn of this remarkable policy statement by Oregon's elected leaders. I think it is deeply significant that at least here in Oregon the legislature has had the vision to point to the nuclear weapons race as a critical danger confronting all Oregonians. It was gratifying to me that the House rejected the argument that nuclear weapons, and by extension nuclear war, are not concerns appropriate to the state legislature for it seemed, and seems, to me that nothing touches all of us more closely than the threat of planetary annihilation which these weapons pose.

Shalam (Hebrew Peace)  
Berta Delman

Sincere regards,  
Wally Priestley  
D-Portland, District No. 16



## Portland Observer

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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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