

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Black History Week 1983

This week is Black History Week, a week set aside to honor the contributions of black people in the building of the nation—from the leaders and martyrs like Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Dubois and Martin Luther King, Jr., to the slaves, farmers and workers.

Black History Week is also a time to consider the progress made from the previous year and to make plans for the coming years.

The current depression purposely brought on by the Reagan Administration's monetary policies has brought unemployment, hunger, homelessness for millions of people—a disproportionate number of them black.

In spite of the already devastating effects of racism and "last hired, first fired" on black workers, the Reagan Administration is using its power to attack and, if possible, eliminate the affirmative action programs that have provided opportunities for some black people.

"Agenda 1983," published by the ultra right-wing think tank, recommended that the Reagan Administration make the destruction of affirmative action its number one priority—that "the Reagan Administration shift its top priority on legal policy from crime control to civil rights, to

attacking the existing affirmative action agreements." The Heritage Foundation is not just a group of kooks; it is highly respected in conservative circles and its recommendations are taken seriously by the Administration. In fact, these sections of the report were reportedly written by Reagan Administration officials who could not be named because of their positions in government.

The Justice Department has already attempted intervention to overturn affirmative action rulings as well as school desegregation orders and this type of activity will surely increase.

The Administration is not content to practice racism at home but has moved closer to the apartheid South African regime, is attempting to politically and economically isolate small black nations like Grenada and Surinam, and is preventing the independence of Namibia.

Black History Week 1983 does not project a bright future, but the future can only be determined by the people. Over one hundred years ago Frederick Douglass said, "Power concedes nothing without a struggle—it never has and it never will."

Ghana faces economic dilemma

The current problems faced by Ghana are an example of the financial crisis imposed on Third World nations by the economic policies of the U.S. and Western Europe.

Nigeria, hard hit by falling prices of oil and other exports, has ejected hundreds of thousands of Ghanians who had gone to Nigeria to work. These people, arriving in such large numbers and with no resources, are seriously taxing Ghana's ability to feed them.

Following the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah in 1965 Ghana generally followed the neo-colonialist model of exporting raw materials and agricultural products and importing a large percentage of its food and most of its essential products. While prices paid for cocoa and other exports have dropped drastically, the prices of imported goods have increased. The result is a deficit of trade and a growing external debt.

Since Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings took over the government a year ago he has attempted to make the country more self-sufficient, increasing the production of food and cutting imports by half. He has attempted to implement a

planned economy, has imposed price controls and has held the exchange rate of the Ghanaian cedis against the U.S. dollar constant.

But when Ghana pays its foreign debt and oil bills it will have only \$60 million—ten percent of what is needed—for food, medicine, fertilizer and other essential imports. Bad weather has damaged both food crops and export crops.

The dilemma facing Ghana now is the need for more money both to feed the returnees and to prop up the economy. Loans from Western banks at high interest rates would be only a temporary help and a long-term detriment. A loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is available only if Ghana agrees to devalue its money, which would immediately raise import costs.

Although there is no way out, Ghana is forced to make a decision. "We all know that the IMF pill is bitter to swallow in terms of economic, social and political consequences," Rawlings said recently. "But the more we hesitate the more bitter the pill becomes."



Individual responsibility

by Calvin O.L. Henry

In 1975, the Calmax Symposium was held at the Corvallis Nendels Inn to bring blacks together and begin to make a written assessment of the status of blacks in Oregon. Out of this symposium came the question, "How do we get black elected or appointed officials to become more accountable, responsive and productive to the black community in Oregon?"

And this question still rages as Oregon economy continues to worsen and the unemployment conditions of blacks are not any better. Plus the 62nd Oregon Legislative Assembly is in regular session with taxes, economic development, education, human resources and budget cuts among the key issues of this session.

The 1982 Oregon Black Political Convention thrust the black community forward in answering this question when it defined the type of leadership, that is needed in the black community, in its leadership plank as follows:

"The Oregon Black Political Convention recognizes that indigenous leadership is essential to the development and enhancement of the black community. Leadership that is accountable, responsive and productive must be developed, encouraged, and supported throughout the community. Black leadership should not be afraid to identify with the black community. This indigenous leadership must be willing to communicate, cooperate, and coordinate with others in defining and presenting the needs and aspirations of the black community. The Oregon Black Political Convention calls upon all organizations and individuals addressing the concerns of blacks to work for the development and recognition of this indigenous leadership throughout Oregon."

It is imperative that the black community defines its type of leadership. If someone outside the community defines the leadership and this type of leadership functions within that definition, then the black community won't have leadership work in its own best interest. Nor will this leadership feel that it has to be responsive, accountable and productive to it.

Since 1971, many efforts outside the Portland area have been made to bring more responsiveness, accountability and productivity to and within the black community in Oregon.

The Corvallis Branch NAACP was organized in 1971. This branch was followed by the organization of the Salem Branch NAACP in 1974 and the Eugene Branch NAACP in 1976. These branches were established to deal with racism in their areas and to help develop a sense of community.

The Corvallis Branch NAACP and the Oregon State Employees

Association (OSEA) worked for the passage of HB 2729 which was enacted by the 1975 Oregon Legislative Assembly. This bill gave statutory force to affirmative action in Oregon and created the position of Director of Affirmative Action directly under the Governor of Oregon. It was and still is the hope that this position would address the employment problems of blacks in Oregon.

In 1977, the NAACP branches on Oregon and the Urban League of Portland recognized that knowledge of the past and current legal, economic, educational, social and political status of blacks in Oregon will be necessary before any headway will be made in answering the questions of responsiveness, accountability and productivity. These groups felt that a commission on the status of blacks in Oregon was needed and had legislation (SB 850) drafted. But this legislation did not pass the legislature.

Also in 1977, the first Call-To-Action Leadership Conference was held at Willamette University and it led to the establishment of the Oregon Assembly For Black Affairs (OABA) on April 9, 1977. OABA is a non-profit, statewide corporation committed to improving the status of blacks in Oregon. It is nonpartisan, but political. OABA was not established to replace the NAACP, Urban League, Black Churches or any other groups; but it is willing to work with any and all organizations working to improve the status of blacks in Oregon.

OABA serves as a political arm of the black community and it encourages blacks to run for public offices. Also it encourages all public officials to become more accountable, responsive and productive to the black community.

SB 579 and HB 2749 were introduced at the 1979 Regular Legislative Session at the request of the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs. These bills would have created the commission on the status of blacks in Oregon. When these bills failed to pass the Legislature, OABA asked Gov. Vic Atiyeh, in July 1979, to establish the commission by executive order. After more than a year from OABA request and some internal opposition, Gov. Atiyeh established the Governor's Commission on Black Affairs with Executive Order #80-18.

Atiyeh established his commission on Black Affairs without any funds. He asked the 1981 Legislature for funding for this commission, but got only one dollar with a limitation on raising money for the commission from gifts and grants.

OABA recognized in 1981 that economic development, as well as politics, must be the major focus of

the black movement in the 1980s. It held its 1981 Economic Summit to encourage black people in Oregon to start, develop and invest in business ventures and economic development.

Again, Atiyeh is asking the 1983 Legislature, as he did in 1981, to fund his commission on Black Affairs (HB 5058), and to establish the commission by legislative enactment (HB 2355).

On February 3, 1983, a subcommittee of the House Human Resources Committee held a hearing on HB 2355. At this hearing, only four blacks were present. Three females and one male. Two females testified. Where were you? Why were there so few blacks present?

Perhaps, the timing of this hearing was wrong? Or legislative notice was inadequate? But whose responsibility is it to check on legislation affecting Oregon's black community? This responsibility belongs to organizations and members of the black community.

The Black Commission is needed in Oregon, and all organizations and individuals in the black community should be working for its funding and establishment by legislative action.

At the Fourth Call-To-Action Leadership Conference, which was held on January 22, 1983, Senator Bill McCoy challenged members of the black community to come to Salem, and let him and other legislators know what the concerns and issues of the community are. State Representative Jim Hill, D-Salem, also expressed that he is willing to work for issues of the black community. He noted that lobbyists are key forces in the legislative process, and the interest of the black community could be best served if it had a lobbyist. Won't you provide these legislators with your inputs and concerns?

The state of the legislative budget is keeping staff from sending out notices of hearing on bills to individuals who want to attend and give testimony. This makes the legislative process somewhat inaccessible to the citizens as it has been in the past. Because of this, there is the need for black elected and appointed officials to assist the black community in getting hearing notices on bills affecting it.

The future of the black community in Oregon rests in the hands of its members. It is not enough to hold only the public officials accountable and responsive. But members of the black community must hold themselves responsive, accountable and productive. They must be willing to communicate, cooperate, and coordinate with others in defining and presenting the needs and aspirations of the black community.

Letters to the Editor

Police fail to protect public

To the editor:

It is outrageous that the Portland City Council and Mayor Ivancie have failed to stop the Police Department's contemptuous and dangerous behavior towards those they are pledged to protect. The police have caused a stroke of an elderly black woman by breaking down her door during a raid. They callously neglected urgent calls for immediate help for a desperate, kidnapped black teenager, Trina Hunter. The police, instead, classified her as a "runaway" and a "prostitute" and

delayed in responding. This delay led to Trina Hunter's death.

Both these events indicate that the "possum incident" mentality and an appallingly casual attitude towards crimes against women and prostitutes is alive and well in the Portland Police Department.

Nationally, the police treat those groups requiring the most protection as natural prey. In Miami and Overtown, police wantonly kill young black men. In New York City the police lead vicious, bloody raids on a gay/drag queen bar. In Port-

land police behavior causes harassment, injury and death to women of color. It is intolerable that women, people of color, the elderly and the poor, whose hard-earned tax dollars support the police, should repeatedly be their victims. It is the responsibility of the City Council, Mayor Ivancie and Chief Stills to see that the police immediately cease their unprovoked attacks and callous neglect of Portland's women, people of color, the elderly and the poor.

Adrienne Weller

From The Boardroom

by County Commissioner Gladys McCoy

Shared Housing is a project of the Center for Urban Education (CUE) that has been in operation since May, 1982. The purpose of Shared Housing is to help elderly and other low and moderate income residents of the Portland metropolitan area locate, evaluate, and select possible housing and living situations that meet their economic and social needs and wants. For those interested in homesharing, Shared Housing acts as a mechanism to seek out and match compatible individuals.

The program has received 1100 inquiries. 900 of those received

Until our economy recovers from the current depression, we are forced to pay more for less. Basic needs become more and more difficult to meet because of spiraling unemployment, excessive taxation, and ever-increasing utility bills. Consequently, the population most impacted by hard times are the elderly and other low and moderate income residents. Ultimately, survival means caring enough to share the diminishing resources.

As a human services advocate, I am deeply concerned about the welfare of all people; especially those in my district. I know there are elderly and other low and moderate income residents in my district who feel hopelessly lost, lonely, and defeated during these times. Shared Housing is a concept to consider to help ease the burdens of loneliness and despair.

housing counseling and 430 completed a homesharing application. Of the 242 homeowner applications, 95 percent fall within the low to moderate income ranges; 50 percent are over 65 years old; 40 percent want to split expenses with a homesharer; and 52 percent are interested in receiving services, i.e., cooking, cleaning, personal care. Of the 190 tenant applications, 53 (28 percent) have no income, another 47 (25 percent) are receiving public assistance, unemployment or support from family or friends; 103 (54 percent) are younger than 34 years old; and 108 (57 percent) are interested in providing services in exchange for reduced rent.

As of December 31, 1982, 62 of the applicants to Shared Housing had negotiated a homesharing agreement. These matches have involved homeowners and tenants of different age, race, sex and circumstances. One match involved an older man and a 19-year-old Indonesian student. The man found himself no longer able to do the yardwork and necessary repairs to maintain his home of 25 years. His family wanted him to sell the home and move to a retirement center. Shared Housing put him in contact with this student who needed low-cost housing and was willing to do the home repairs in addition to the yardwork.

Another successful match involved a 65-year-old woman and a

70-year-old woman. One woman was looking for some security and companionship. The other woman wished to live near her church and also wanted the companionship that homesharing offered her. Her only other option was a retirement home. Both these women are very active but wanted some special companionship.

These two matches illustrate how Shared Housing has helped people not only with their housing needs but also some important social needs.

As your County Commissioner, I encourage District 5 II residents who are interested in this program to identify your needs and phone or visit one of the participating information centers. A packet containing a description of the program, an application form, and an outline of issues to be considered before deciding to homeshare is presented or mailed to the interested party. The Central Office is located in the Community Services Building, 718 W. Burnside, Room 504, phone 222-5559. In-district locations include the Urban League Senior Center, 4128 N.E. Union, phone 288-8338; Peninsula Project Able, 760 N. Jersey, phone 286-8228, and Project Linkage, 2728 N.E. 34th, phone 249-8215.

Do you feel this program is for you? If you do, then reach out by contacting one of the above offices to let them know you care and are willing to share!

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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.

The Portland Observer was established in 1970 by A. Lee Henderson, founder and President.

Subscriptions: \$10.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

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283-2486

National Advertising Representative
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