

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Jobs: At what price?

Oregon has turned the corner of inflation, or at least that is what the mass media is telling us. We ask, is this true? Ask the man or woman at the unemployment office. Ask the man or woman who has given up looking for a job because they can't find one.

How many people are now working part time when they need a full time job to feed their kids, pay their rents and pay the inflated gas and electric bill? How many people are wearing heavy sweaters as they sit down to dinner because they have to deprive themselves and their families of the comfort of heat this chilly winter? How many people read the newspapers and say, "Well, I guess things are getting better for someone, but I guess I am not one of those lucky people."

Statistics are tricky things and none of us should be fooled by them. A lower unemployment figure means that fewer people registered with the unemployment office and that's all it means.

One of the examples of the increased employment rate given by the State Employment Division is in the forest products industry. What is the price to be paid by this increase in employment?

The International Woodworkers of America (IWA) of the AFL-CIO, which represents 100,000 workers in that industry so vital to Oregon is presently in negotiations with the major forest products industry and all indications point to a strike situation when that contract runs out in June. The employers are asking for major concessions by the workers, a trend that has swept the nation as the major corporations use the economic crisis as an excuse to weaken union contracts.

Red Russel, the local representative for the IWA told the convention of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union which is meeting in Portland this week that the employers are out to break the union.

"It is not just concessions," Russel said, "but an all-out campaign by the capitalists of this country to destroy the unions."

While many of us look on the organized trade union movement as something removed from our own experience, it is the trade union movement that is the front line for the wages and benefits we receive. It is the only organized body in this nation solely constituted to protect the rights of all working people. Whether we work under a union contract or are unorganized, or we are unemployed, it is the trade union movement that sets the pattern of wages and benefits, fights for unemployment rights, and leads the fight for social change.

The fact that the governor of this state has refused to meet with the head of the Oregon State

Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) demonstrates the total disregard of the present leader of this state for the rights of all the working people.

Now our illustrious mayor has returned from Japan with great promises of jobs and prosperity. We only have to look at the auto workers in Fremont, California, who have been told rather bluntly by General Motors and Toyota that if jobs come, they will be jobs with low wages and fewer protections or benefits than those enjoyed by unionized workers there.

We must be aware that the benefits and wages—as well as the unemployment system, welfare, medicare and other social programs for the people of this nation—were won from the struggles, and often blood of the working people of this nation. This was accomplished through the unity of working people, black, white and brown.

Now we are being beaten over the head with the promise of jobs. But jobs at a cost. That cost is giving up what our fellow workers have won for us through their blood, sweat and tears.

We at the *Portland Observer* agree that we must have jobs, but not at any cost.

The ILWU called for a national jobs program similar to that of the 1930s—a program which can put millions of unemployed back to work, rebuilding our transportation system, railroads, inner cities, sewer systems. The convention called for tight regulations on the basic necessities of life—food, energy, finance—and proposed that since the private sector has proven itself unworthy of providing the citizens of this country with such that they should be partially or fully nationalized.

A radical notion? We don't think so, considering the present state of the economy and the evidence that the corporations have proven their disregard for their own social responsibility to the people of this nation.

We must seek radical changes. They can only come about if we begin to organize ourselves. We must educate ourselves and our communities to the need for combining our collective strength. We must seek new leaders with new approaches.

For those of us who are unemployed there is no discussion on this need. For those of us who are still lucky enough to hold a job, we must assure that we keep our job. The employed and unemployed must become united in this fight.

The people of Chicago have voiced their desire for progressive change, by rejecting a racist anti-labor campaign to elect that city's first black mayor.

We in Portland can turn a rotten situation around, too. We can demand and elect leaders who will truly reflect the needs of all the people of this city.

It's the American way

Kolff Medical, the maker of the artificial heart tested by Barney *Frank*, says the heart will be a money-maker. The heart required \$15 million to develop and since early 1982 has been the investment target of \$6 to \$7 million.

The investors are those who have most to gain—corporations in the medical field: Hospital Corp. of America, Nashville; American Hospital Supply Co., Evanston, Ill; and Humana,

Inc., a hospital corporation in Louisville.

The company expects sales in the billions in the United States. The heart is expected to sell at \$15,000 and an estimated 36,000 to 66,000 persons could qualify for its use.

Rather than donate their discovery to the service of humanity, the maker of the Jarvik-7 will make money. This could be called profiting from someone else's suffering.

Evelyn M. Collins, Director
Grace Collins Memorial Center

Letters to the Editor

Police behavior out of line

Re: The rock-throwing teens and police.

It is extremely sad when adult policemen act in a juvenile manner. The case in question is such a case.

The young men needed a reprimand and even needed to face their conduct before their parents but to throw them on the ground? They are not criminals but this type of ac-

tion, by the police that are supposed to be helping reduce crime, often embitters our youth and they get into violent acts.

We are supposed to be trying to reduce sex crimes but the obscene remark instead of reducing sex crimes would only whet the mind of youth to "find out what it is all about."

I personally feel the officers

should be given time off without pay to do a little self-examination and I feel they should apologize for their conduct.

The act of racial discrimination should not be tolerated on our police force!

Jesse Jackson for President?

by Manning Marable
"From The Grassroots"

Many Americans recognize that next year's presidential race will be more than a referendum on Reaganism. Properly understood, Reaganism represents an attempt by the corporations to accelerate capital accumulation at the expense of workers, an effort to reduce permanently the levels of social services and public programs at the expense of an unprecedented arms buildup. In short, the basic tenor of our debate with the Right must be cast into three slogans—jobs, peace and freedom.

In this regard, members of the Congressional Black Caucus have taken the lead in defining the pressing concerns which affect blacks, Latinos, poor and working class people. John Conyers of Detroit is developing perhaps the most progressive full employment bill in U.S. history. Parren Mitchell of Baltimore has taken the lead in denouncing Reagan's economic austerity programs. And Washington D.C.'s Walter Fauntroy was even arrested last year in a public demonstration against the dumping of toxic waste in a rural, black North Carolina county.

The problem before us, therefore, is making sure that these questions of jobs (a full employment economy), peace (reductions in both conventional and nuclear weapons) and freedom (affirmative action legislation, a restoration of human services, etc.) become part of the presidential debate. As I see matters, there are only two ways to begin this process. One strategy would involve running a progressive black candidate for the Democratic Party nomination in a select group of ten to twelve states. The states should have either sizeable blocs of black, Latino, and trade union voters, or a tradition of political liberalism (for example, New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, Illinois, Pennsylvania, California, Washington, D.C.). The goal of this strategy would be not to win the nomination, of course, but to force the frontrunner, Mondale, to the left. Whomever emerges as the Democratic Party's alternative to Reagan—whether Mondale, Glenn, or any of the lesser lights—

he will not respond to the demands of the black freedom movement except in token gestures, unless he is absolutely forced to do so.

This cannot be done unless a progressive black candidate goes into the convention with 300 to 400 delegate votes, and when no single white candidate has a majority of delegate votes. This also means, of course, the Mondale must be denied a first-ballot victory at the convention.

Unquestionably, the best qualified candidate for this strategy is Ronald V. Dellums. Since his election to Congress, Dellums has represented the most principled and progressive alternative available in American politics. His unique strength is his ability to relate to a diverse constituency: blacks, trade unionists, feminists, Latinos, environmentalists, peace activists, etc. A second choice, Georgia State Senator Julian Bond, has his own unique following within the civil rights community. Both are nationally-known and would have access to the media (a critically important factor), and could attract significant financial backing from unions, religious, disarmament and black groups.

The crux of this ambitious strategy lies in the candidate's ability to divest himself from personal gain and the opportunism so inherent in American politics, and in ably representing a broad, multi-racial, multiclass constituency on the liberal-left. I am convinced that Dellums could do this. Unfortunately, some Black Caucus members and other politicians have in recent days put forward another candidate who would be the centerpiece of the strategy outlined above: the country preacher himself, Jesse Jackson.

Jackson has been a familiar political figure within black America for over fifteen years. His showboat posturing, his embellished rhetoric, his monumental egotism, are to an extent akin to a mimicry of the late Adam Clayton Powell of Harlem. Unlike the restless refugee of Bimini, however, Jackson's chief constituency is his own organization, Operation PUSH. He has never been elected to public office. Jackson's defenders claim that he is the best-known black political figure in Am-

erica. Name-recognition is of course a valuable factor, but insufficient in itself to validate a person's political credentials. Everyone still knows who Jesse James was, but I sincerely doubt that this nineteenth century rogue was a suitable candidate for high office!

Jackson has played a very ambiguous role in the Movement. In 1972 he delivered a keynote address at the Black Political Convention held in Gary, Indiana, yet subsequently disavowed any independent challenge to white Democrats in that year's presidential race. During the Miami Rebellion of 1980, he flew dramatically into Liberty City in an effort to cool off young militants. At the Democratic National Convention held in New York City in 1980, he served as a front-man for Carter, endeavoring to water down Kennedy-inspired jobs initiatives. Yet only weeks later, Jackson applauded Reagan's speech before the National Urban League, and claimed that "the black vote is the wild card in this election. The black community has the responsibility and obligation to listen to what both parties and all candidates have to say."

The chief weakness of a potential Jackson campaign, however, is in the candidate's inability to awaken the support of progressives outside of the black community. Jackson's PUSH has no meaningful contacts within the civil rights leadership. Black nationalists and most leftists view Jackson with undisguised contempt as a political opportunist, a chameleon whose colors change with the issues. There is a real danger that Jackson-the-candidate would capitulate to Mondale (or even Glenn) at the convention, after a deal had been cut behind the scenes, leaving blacks and progressives out in the proverbial cold.

The strategy to realign American politics in 1984 must begin with a candidate who can be trusted to represent our interest. As far as I'm concerned, Jesse Jackson disqualified himself a decade ago. Jackson is not a black leader—he is a celebrity. And the seriousness of the political crisis which is before us demands that any independent campaign start with a level of unquestioned integrity.

Mayor's budget guts MHRC

(Continued from page 1 column 6)
logue; we should have input."

Following the removal of three programs and cutting of staff, only a director and clerk will remain.

The rationale that has been given, LaGuardia said, is that MHRC should be limited to advocacy and research and not operate programs. "This does not make sense," he said. Two of the sections that are to be transferred—fair housing and handicapped—are advocacy and research programs.

"Cutting back to two people will put us where we were 12 years ago," LaGuardia said. There is no way that any research could be done and there would be little time for advocacy.

"They say we should do research and advocacy but that's impossible. Elimination of staff would not allow the volunteer Commissioners to fulfill their roles. The research for the committees—Education, Employment, Housing, Justice—is done by the staff."

Recent staff research includes the study on minority youth unemployment, an annual evaluation of affirmative action and equal employment in the City and County, a newly released study on lack of multi-cultural training in colleges of education in Oregon, monitoring of pretrial release, the study that showed blacks receive pretrial incarceration in higher percentages than whites, annual studies of the School

District's suspension and expulsion data. Staff research for the justice committee resulted in a translation and interpretation program for defendants who speak little or no English, and a handbook for use with deaf defendants.

The programs that are recommended to be transferred—fair housing, neighborhood mediation, and handicapped advocacy, all came from staff research that demonstrated a real need no one was meeting.

Another response to Commissioner Strachan's rationale is that advocacy programs located in the bureaus they are to monitor do not work well. The person can easily come under pressure and be unable to function when he tells the bureau head that all is not in order. An outside agency—like the independent MHRC—can often do a better job. "Many of the investigations and recommendations MHRC has made would have been squelched if it had been part of the City," LaGuardia said.

Another issue that arises is parity. The County and City did fund MHRC equally, but the County decreased its payments. Does that mean the City should follow suit? "We have been bounced back and forth like a ping pong ball," LaGuardia explained. We spend an undetermined amount of time in twelve different budget meetings. We have to go to the City and the County to beg for

money to survive. One of the biggest things we have to do is lobby for a small amount of money to try to eliminate very big problems—race, poverty, etc."

With incidents of racial harassment increasing; with a high rate of employment, especially for minorities; with the federal government failing to deal with lack of equal opportunity—the responsibility falls even greater on local government. "I am dismayed at the dismantling of the Human Relations Commission at this time," LaGuardia said. "Minorities and the poor are really under siege."

"The City and the County have to set some kind of image now. I don't believe there should be any cuts in MHRC's budget now. But to cut MHRC by nearly 70 percent when other bureaus are getting millions more is unfair and dangerous."

Whether this budget is just a first step to eliminating MHRC—reducing it to nothing and then closing it next year because it is not making visible accomplishments, is not known. The true motives for the change and who is responsible are not yet known.

As the *Observer* went to press Wednesday, Commissioner Strachan was unavailable for comment.

MHRC's budget will be before a public hearing at City Hall, Tuesday, April 19th, at 1:30 p.m.

ILWU hits Reaganomics

(Continued from page 1 col. 6)

spending to funding for human needs."

The Martin Luther King resolution of the ILWU calls for legislation to make January 15 a national holiday. ILWU locals in both Northern and Southern California participated in demonstrations commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. It is further proposed that ILWU locals negotiate for observance of Martin Luther King Day as a paid holiday in their

union contracts.

The ILWU has had a long and militant history, born out of the great strikes of the 1930s. "We withstood the hot breath of McCarthyism," Herman said. But the seriousness of job losses from plant closures, runaways and general layoffs due to the depressed state of the economy was reflected in the ILWU Officers Report which reflected a drop of over 5,000 union members from a membership of 52,100.

Daughtry speaks

Reverend Herbert Daughtry, founder and chairman of the National Black United Front, will speak at Portland State University, 7 p.m., Friday, April 22nd, in 75 Lincoln Hall. Rev. Daughtry's talk is sponsored by Portland State's Black Cultural Affairs Board. Call 288-6700 or 229-4075 for more information.



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