

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Historic coalition first step

A significant coalition was formed last week by the Black United Front, the Albina Ministerial Alliance and the Citizens Party to support legislation in the Oregon Legislature.

The three groups have determined to work together on a legislative program that includes: the medically needy bill; two-parent ADC; South Africa divestment; the deadly force bill; a homestead exemption for property tax relief; and opposition to the sales tax.

Other groups who support the coalition's "Grassroots Legislative Agenda" are invited to join the coalition, even though their political

philosophies and methods of action may be different.

The unhappy truth is that too often the interest groups that can finance smooth-talking lobbyists backed by volumes of research have the greatest influence in the legislature. The poor and oppressed, and the organizations that work to assist them, are not able to compete with money. Therefore, those most in need of the help and protection of the State are left without a voice.

The new coalition—and those who will join—can become a powerful force for the poor and dispossessed.

Catholic Bishops lead offensive

The Catholic Bishops of the United States have come out with a strong statement against nuclear weapons, calling for a halt to testing, building or deploying these weapons.

The Bishops call the potential to destroy the world a moral issue and state their obligation to speak out as pastors and peacemakers.

Whether the Catholic people of this country will accept this as a mandate for action is yet to be seen, but if they do, they can be a powerful force for peace. Already, one Bishop is interpreting it to mean that a Catholic in the armed services should refuse to use a nuclear weapon.

"The 'new moment' which exists in the public debate about nuclear weapons provides a creative opportunity and a moral imperative to examine the relationship between public opinion and public policy," the Bishops said. That root is the very foundation of our government. The Examination should be extended to opposition to all U.S. military and covert action, whether in Central America, Afghanistan, Asia or the Middle East.

It is imperative that the Protestant churches and the Jewish synagogues follow suit. While the churches teach love, peace and justice, their members cooperate to promote an arms race that can only lead to the destruction of all humanity.

The President is pushing for additional nuclear arms and an overall strengthening of the

military; Congress is divided. If the religious people of the United States are to have any influence over the future now is the time to act. What better witness to the power of God than an outpouring of action against war?



Newscafter: "A limited nuclear war was held today in Europe . . ."

Letters to the Editor Objections to 'prostitute' use

On Saturday, April 30th, the annual March Against Racism sponsored by the Black United Front ended in a rally outside the Martin Luther King Center. Several speakers delivered talks and urged us to keep on working against racism.

During one of the talks, a speaker used the phrase "quiet as a prostitute in church," referring to the Mayor of Portland's lack of supportive statements during the Harriet Tubman controversy. Although I certainly understand the speaker's point in making that statement, I believe the speaker does prostitutes a disservice to talk about them in that way, and in the same breath as Portland's Mayor who is using his persecution of prostitutes as a main element of his "war on crime."

A prostitute can mean a woman or man who sells their services as a sexual partner for money. A prostitute can also mean a person who "sells out" some principle they believe in in order to make money. Sometimes there is a fine line between normal everyday compromises we make to survive and the prostitution of our souls. Prostitution in this second sense is clear when we, for example, take a job in a corporation which directly does substantial business with the apartheid, racist country of South Africa.

In this larger sense of "prostitute" we may well find many people who have sold out their beliefs and principles and yet who have the audacity to speak up in church. However, women who by circumstance are in the "business" of prostitution are expected to keep quiet. I have been told that St. Paul's exhortations for women to keep quiet in church were made in order to prevent a small group of women, ritual pagan prostitutes, from speaking. With all due deference to St. Paul, why did he not enjoin all men to not speak, since some men, and not a small group I am guessing, used the services of those prostitutes?

Again, with all due deference (I certainly like that phrase "with all due deference," don't I?) to the speaker at the rally last Saturday, his use of the phrase "quiet as a prostitute in church" was really an ironic use, for there were present at the rally men who have often spoken in churches, who I know have used the services of prostitutes. I'm not guessing, I know. That speaker may well know, too.

I think that all persons, within the rules of their religions, ought to be able to speak in their churches. Those of us who are Christians especially ought to recall that Christ had to rebuke the apostles who were scandalized by Mary Magdalene wiping Christ's feet with her oil and her hair. Christ was honored by

Mary Magdalene's honest display of respect for him. Christ in fact had strong silent protest for those who, in another incident reported in the new testament, would "judge," and even stone, the woman with "many husbands."

I offer this letter as a request to that speaker at the rally, and to others who have used this phrase, to think about the meaning of what they are saying. Speakers might use instead the phrase "quiet as a general at a peace rally" or perhaps the somewhat longer but descriptive phrase, "quiet as a politician when old people freeze and children go hungry."

Rose Gangle

Girls die

Re: April 27 article on Rev. Herbert Daughtry. There is a wealth of sad truth in Rev. Daughtry's statement ("A black child in America has a one in two chance of being born in poverty. He is twice as likely as a white baby to die during the first year of life. If a black child survives his first year, the odds are against him growing up healthy, wealthy or wise."). However, his perhaps unconsciously sexist language underlines an important qualifier to the scenario: If "he" is in fact a "she", her chances for success are even more slim.

Jennifer E. Micheau

Crisis in Zimbabwe

by Manning Marable

Part I of a Two Part Series

In recent months, the American media has delivered a grim eulogy for the "democratic experiment" of Zimbabwe. The government of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe has received intense criticism from the right and, not surprisingly, from some elements of the left sympathetic to Mugabe's rival Joshua Nkomo, leader of the opposition ZANU party. Over a thousand people have been killed since December in the fighting between the nation's two major ethnic groups, the majority Shona and the minority Ndebele. Western aid and investment in Zimbabwe has been halted; reporters and opponents of Mugabe's dominant ZAPU party talk of the creation of a "black police state."

No analysis of Zimbabwe's present crisis is possible outside of a brief review of the fundamental historical burden facing all African nations today: the legacy of colonialism and systemic underdevelopment by the capitalist West. The brutal realities can be summed up in a brief set of statistics: 22 of the 30 poorest nations in the world are in black Africa; from 1970-1980, the economies of eight black nations shrank, and the combined debt of all 30 countries in these years soared by 1000 percent; only 3 countries currently grow enough food to feed their indigenous populations. Even *Wall Street Journal* noted recently, "Africa is a continent of poor soils and unfriendly climates. Markets are too small and scattered to support local manufacturing. Distances are too vast for effective transportation and communication. . . . Africa's economies are based on external demand, on prices set by the West for raw materials that, with few exceptions, can be bought from any number of sellers." None of the countries "make the manufactured goods the others need. None of them want the weak, overvalued currencies of their neighbors. And it's cheaper anyway to buy maize and sugar,

bicycles and hoes, from the West than from each other."

The International Monetary Fund has meted out its most severe "medicine" to the new African regimes. Under IMF pressure, notes the *Journal*, "Zimbabwe devalued its dollar by 20 percent in recent months. It has frozen wages and raised the price of maize, its staple food, by 40 percent. Sudan devalued the pound, introduced incentives on its state farms and raised the price of sugar. The list goes on: Kenya, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, the Ivory Coast, all of them are acceding to the IMF." Zimbabwe's acquiescence to IMF demands followed a series of economic problems. Many African workers' salaries were increased by one-third to two-thirds after independence, while white professionals earning above \$20,000 had their wages frozen. The economic recession of 1982, a severe drought which reduced agricultural output and the decline of gold prices produced a burgeoning balance of payments deficit. The growth rate of the GNP declined from 15 percent in 1980 to only 2 percent in 1982.

Western investment and technical services are to some degree a necessary and inevitable aspect of development, even under Marxist governments. Thus in recent months, for instance, Mozambique has invited technicians from U.S. and Dutch companies to bid for oil concessions under agreements which guarantee 50 percent of the profits to the state. Specialists from France, Brazil, East Germany, Sweden and the Soviet Union are prospecting for new coal reserves, which are currently estimated at 300 million tons. Star-Kist Foods of California recently met with Maputo officials to initiate fishing activities along the Indian Ocean coastline. Zimbabwe is thus following the path charted in part by both Angola and Mozambique. To date, there has been only one major firm from the U.S., the Heinz corporation, which has established an important factory since indepen-

dence. Zimbabwe's pressing need for foreign exchange and for the development of a local industrial and commercial infrastructure must of necessity involve relations with the capitalist West.

Agricultural reconstruction in Zimbabwe has been agonizingly slow, but steady. Three years ago, 6,000 Rhodesian white settlers controlled over one half of Zimbabwe's farmland. Under the Mugabe government, five million acres of land has been sold or seized, and then given to 20,000 Black families. By 1985, the whites will control roughly one quarter of the land, and another 162,000 African families will receive farmland. As African journalist Jean-Francois Lisee has noted, "primary education is compulsory and free, and there are twice as many children in classrooms now than in white Rhodesia. Free medical care for the poor has been introduced, and, while doctors are in short supply, rural women are being trained in first aid and preventive care."

At the highpoint of white hegemony, about a quarter million whites lived in Rhodesia. Since 1980, about 75,000 whites left in 1982 alone. Mugabe has attempted to entice whites with administrative, agricultural and technical skills to remain in the country. Even today, most white families maintain a host of servants, and profit from a standard of living which in African terms can only be described as decadent. To ensure that their wealth remains inside Zimbabwe, the government insists that an emigrating white take only \$1,000 in money and no furniture.

Like other African Marxists, Mugabe is desperately attempting to improve the socio-economic conditions for the masses while maintaining the necessary environment for Western investment on a cooperative basis. Given the destabilizing role of South Africa, the IMF, and the presence of many white settlers from the ancient regime, it is a difficult task.

Salem Update

by Margaret Moore

Legislation to create an Oregon Civil Conservation Corps is being considered in committee in Salem. Rick Bauman, District II, Multnomah County, State House of Representatives, is actively supporting this legislation, known as House Bill 2757. There has been very little publicity on this important issue, which suits the soft drink industry just fine, because a one-cent tax on each container of soft drink sold will be levied to fund this program.

But it is not in Oregon's best interest to turn away from this program. The reasons for this lie in two currently neglected areas of concern which this program will address: one is the care-taking of the state's natural, historical and cultural resources which are now being neglected because there is insufficient money to spend in the area of conservation. The other is providing a means for employment, social contribution and economic independence for young adults, ages 18-23, so many of whom are dead-ended in their lives because of the lack of jobs.

The proposed OCCC is modeled on its highly successful predecessor of the New Deal in the thirties, which helped numerous young Americans to make it through the Depression, and provided substantial assistance maintaining and improving resource areas throughout the country. If all the people whose lives were positively influenced by the New Deal CCC would write one letter each to their legislators or newspaper, that would result in an impressive amount of mail.

Today the economic situation is similarly dreary, and it is especially difficult for the young, inexperienced worker who is at the bottom of the hiring list when older, more mature

people are competing for the same jobs. The OCCC offers an opportunity for young people to work, and work hard, for minimum wage. More than that, it offers a work-living situation that insists on personal responsibility, self-discipline and, for those who have not yet completed their high school education, mandatory study in the evening toward getting their GED.

California has had a Civil Conservation Corps since 1976 and it is paying back almost double in services what it is costing the state to fund it. Their motto is "Hard Work, Low Pay, Miserable Working Conditions." Given young people's reputation for idleness, why should they even be interested in such a program? Because chronic idleness is not a human being's natural response to the world. Sitting around on your fanny day after day, with no future goals, is boring and anxiety-producing. People need to feel there is a place for them to do work that has some end result to which they can point with pride. It is only when such opportunity is not available that people become lazy, resentful and anti-social. This situation is often "relieved" by uncontrolled use of drugs and by activity in criminal behavior which both pays for the drugs and is a demonstration of contempt for an indifferent society. While these ills can and do affect people of all ages, we need to be particularly concerned for our young people because they are particularly vulnerable to a sense of personal failure, a sense that they are unim-

portant. Self-esteem, once experienced, is a powerful force in the rest of one's life.

But self-esteem comes not from hand-outs, but from accepting challenges and accomplishing things that have a recognizable purpose, and that in return provide economic sustenance and social support.

Can we in Oregon afford to turn our backs on this kind of opportunity? The OCCC will affect all of us. Besides the young people and their worried families, it affects those who use wilderness areas and recreation areas, those who are concerned with preserving endangered species, not to mention roads and trails, those who may need flood, drought or storm relief and assistance, those who are tired of seeing vandalism, pollution and decay. Even those whose lives will be complicated by administering the one-cent tax must perceive that the extra effort on their part has a purpose and meaning. It is something they can point to with pride.

Is Oregon going to get a CCC? Right, it looks dubious. There is lobbying going on in Salem by those who can "afford" to persuade legislators that this piece of legislation is unnecessary to the well-being of the state, meaning they don't want to have to deal with it.

Who will speak up for this program? It is up to us who still believe that government exists to provide for the economic and social well-being of its citizens. Letters, phone calls, pulpets all have their impact. But we must do it—now!

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