Page 2 Portland Observer, July 13, 1983

**EDITORIAL/OPINION** The "Poverty Gap"

There appears to be a move afoot to divide minority groups and to create competition among them for public services. Frequently heard is the phrase "feminization of poverty."

A U.S. Commission of Civil Rights Commission report, "A Growing Crisis: Disadvantaged Women and Their Children" details the economic hardships faced by female heads of households and their children.

Data in the report shows that between 1950 and 1981 the poverty rate for white male-headed families declined by 51 percent (of course the current depression has forced many families back into poverty). The number of persons in poverty level families headed by women increased 54 percent.

These facts demonstrate that women still suffer job and wage discrimination. The report concluded that "to ignore these implications is unconscionable negligence. The bodies, minds and spirits of millions of women and children are being inevitably... affected by the dispiriting hand of poverty."

The forces of government must come to the aid of women who, in attempting to raise their families, are receiving the brunt of discrimination and neglect.

Those politicians who, for their own political ends, are using the hardships of women to attempt to foment conflict and competition between women and ethnic minorities neglect to add the other vital statistics contained in the report.

The situation is even worse for families headed my minority women. In 1981 the poverty rates for persons in families headed by women with children under 18 years was 68 percent for blacks, 67 percent for Hispanics, and 43 percent for whites.

It is imperative for those who are adversely affected by discrimination to work together to force the changes that will bring justice and equality and to resist the influences of those who would divide and conquer.

# No right to know in Oregon

The "right-to-know" bill that would have required employers to inform their employees about toxic substances used in the workplace has gone down to defeat in the Oregon House of Representatives. Only 23 representatives voted for it.

With millions of workers suffering from exposure to asbestos, dioxins and many other chemicals, this bill was essential to the public

health. The bill included long-term record-keeping so that people exposed to substances now believed to be safe, but later determined to be dangerous, could obtain information on their exposure.

Apparently the representatives were scared off by those who make heavy contributions to their campaign chests and, of course, Governor Atiyeh had threatened a veto.



# The right to eat by Dr. Manning Marable "From the Grassroots"

Do poor people, children and the unemployed have a right to eat? Ronald Reagan doesn't think so.

For fiscal year 1983, the government cut \$280 million from child nutrition programs, \$920 million from food stamps, and another \$70 million from the special Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Now Reagan wants to slash another billion dollars from food stamps, and throw another 100,000 women and infants off the WIC program. In 1984, Reagan says he wants to cut another \$400 million from child nutrition programs. In short, the president somehow has the idea that he is Adolph Hitler. and that babies, pregnant women, and unemployed families are today's version of the German Jews.

What are the results of these gestapo-like policies toward the poor? According to the New York Times, gross hunger and malnutrition are becoming more prevalent every day across America.

In Detroit, 410,000 men, women

and children receive public aid. 2,500 laid-off men and women run out of their unemployment benefits every month. The city's food service programs are too poorly financed to meet the crisis. Some private groups have started emergency food programs, and over one hundred churches have begun soup kitchens and meal services to the neighborhood poor. Yet thousands of Detroit families are starving.

In Denver, several thousand people sleep on the streets and alleys at night. Fifty food banks and pantries have been started by the city government, and about one thousand people are currently receiving free food from volunteer groups and religious centers. But many emergency food service centers say that they can't keep up with the demand for food.

Reagan says the answer to the crisis of hunger in America is "surplus cheese" and "self reliance." Translated into real terms, this means thousands of infants dying of malnutrition; thousands of poor

From The Boardroom

by Gladys McCoy Multnomah County Commissioner

people pushed into crime to feed their families; thousands of elderly who die prematurely due to a lack of food

Where's the money going to come from to guarantee that all Americans have a basic right to eat? The Pentagon budget. Weeks ago, Congress approved part of the budget for developing the MX Missile. If we halted production of the MX, the direct savings over five years would be \$23.9 billion. A freeze on nuclear warhead development and testing over five years would save \$3.6 billion. Halting the air-launched Cruise Missile could save another \$5.2 billion over the same period.

The choice is ours. Either the American people spend their taxes to promote the danger of nuclear war, or we build a new society where hunger is abolished, where full employment exists, and where decent schools, public medical care and public housing are considered a basic human right.

We did it and with much less pain and agony than had been envisioned! You may recall my lamentation in January, when we realized Multnomah County would be reducing its General Fund revenues by 14 million dollars (six zeroes!). Most of the special interest groups, Art, Libraries, Home Extension, were very visible, recognizing the budget crunch but - don't cut these programs. However, there was no way such a deep cut could be made without impacting every program. The expectation had been approxi-

top of some losses already sustained in December Well, the dust has settled and we can now see more clearly what the results are. While the cuts were real, the job loss has been greatly curtailed. To date only six persons actually lost their jobs. This is due in great measure to Project Save, an award-winning strategy so recognized by the National Association of Counties at its annual meeting in 1982.

mately 137 jobs wold be lost ... on

Project Save places employees whose jobs are eliminated in other openings within the County. Sometimes retraining is required, but the effort is to reduce the number of unemployed people in the community.

employees, the number is not very large. On the other hand, when we lose one, the impact, percentagewise is very great. For instance, achieve a 5% goal in management only requires one person, conversely, if we lose one person, the impact would be no minority in management. (Department head).

Unfortunately, this is the case currently, Multnomah County has no minority managers. However, 1 am pleased to know of the employees who lost their jobs, only one minority position was lost. I should not become complacent about this situation, because a recent update of our Affirmative Action program indicated some real disparity between the goals we have established for ourselves and the current work force. Obviously, we need to pay more attention to our Affirmative Action policies which have enjoyed full support of the Board and the Administration. If it is to be an effective program, it must be systematically reviewed, there must be expectation from managers, there must be consequences for non-compliance within departments, as well as commendations for those managers who exceed the approved goals. I will take that as a personal challenge for

formerly had five departments: Administrative Services, Environmental Services, Justice Services, Human Services, and Office of County Management. Budget cuts, plus the reorganization that occurred as a result of Ballot Measure 6 in May of 1982, that required four more elected officials, plus the State assumption of the court system necessitated our reorganization of County government.

Currently, we have Environmental Services, General Services, Human Services and a much reduced Justice Services. The May elections also gave us an elected Sheriff, elected Clerk, (Registrar of Elections), elected Assessor and the District Court Clerk. Recently, controversy over the District Clerk relates to the fact the position was transferred to the State January 1, 1983, leaving a salaried position with no functions. The Clerk was hired by the State to carry on the acquired functions, however, the new County Charter change also stipulated that we pay him. He has been collecting one check from Multnomah County for the elected position with no job responsibilities and the second check from the State for performing duties. The issue is currently being litigated and it m be that money will be returned to the General Fund when the issue is settled.

# Letters to the Editor

### **BETTER JACKSON THAN NONE**

### To the Editor:

Any political movement is better than none. Why? Because if we look back into history we will find that all movements have produced some positive results.

The U.S. Civil War of 1861-1865 abolished slavery.

The Civil Rights Movement of the sixties improved some human rights.

The anti-colonial wars in Africa have created many free African countries.

The Afghan revolutions of 1973 and 1978 have created a democratic government today. Despite the U.S. support for the feudal counterrevolutionaries, the present government is the sole representative of the masses. Don't let the number of immigrants in Pakistan deceive you. As soon as peace is achieved, there will be prosperity and most of the Afghan migrants will go back to their country. In fact, many of them are already moving back.

Remember the perverted Italy of

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## Portland Observer

The Portland Observer (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killings worth, Portland, Oregon 97217, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon

The Portland Observer was established in 1970 Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

> Alfred L. Henderson, Editor/Publisher Al Williams, Advertising Manager

HAL NEWSPAN Sue Ribbon

Mussolini and compare it with the

where even the worst political move-

ments have eventually produced

progressive results. Maybe not im-

Certainly any political movement

can be perverted by the commercial

monopolies. Any perversion of a

movement is a temporary error of

evolution which can be corrected by

conscious human effort in the proc-

Certainly if we compare Rev.

Jackson with Mr. Ronald V. Dellums,

Julian Bond, and Harold Washing-

ton the difference is as big as day

and night. Because the latter gentle-

men are proven progressive politi-

cians who have years of fighting ex-

Certainly Mr. Jackson's candi-

dacy at this time might sound op-

portunistic, but any movement is

better than none. One needs a place

to learn and practice. Jackson's

candidacy would create a forum for

by A.M. Nuljon

the issues that you may have.

perience in the art of politics.

ess of the movement or after it.

mediately, but eventually.

I could bring you several examples

Italy of today.

283-2486

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Of course, Affirmative Action is an area of great interest to me because if we achieve all of our goals, in terms of minority and female

SALEM - Two weeks ago, this

space contained a discussion of

using income tax increases to fund

property tax relief. One proposal

under consideration would tighten

up use of capital gains status - an

accounting trick that allows those

who make money from investments

to pay lower taxes than if the same

The column posed this question:

How does it help me if someone

buys 100 shares of Pacific North-

west Bell, holds it for the required

time, sells at a profit and is taxed at

a lower rate than those who work

One reader offers this answer:

Without the tax benefits, investors

would choose less risky, short-term

investments and long-term capital

A common sense explanation of

the philosophy behind the system,

and one that illustrates the danger

of columnists resorting to the short-

hand rhetoric so popular with street

corner communists and college

newspapers. However, even though

the capital gains tax has better

justification than my earlier column

suggested, restricting the system to

help provide property tax relief re-

First, it would appear that no

matter what the lawmakers do, a

limitation initiative will be circulat-

ed and most likely make the ballot.

Proponents have rented office space

mains a favored approach.

money comes from working.

for their money?

would dry up.

my office.

Another area that resulted from budget cuts has been a reorganization of the County structure. We



in Portland, are publishing a newsletter and actively soliciting contributions.

The job, then, is not so much to keep the limitation off the ballot, but to keep it from being approved. Legislators would do well to follow the advice of Sen. Charles Hanlon, head of the Senate Revenue Committee, who contends that tax policy should be based on sound choices. not response to threats to organize another initiative.

Which is not to say that lawmakers should ignore last fall's near-passage of Ballot Measure 3. Voters demanded property tax relief and the Legislature had best provide

The House spent five months constructing a system to do that with a sales tax. However, the idea barely got the 31 votes it needed to pass the lower chamber and Senate President Ed Fadeley has made no secret of his intention to see that the proposal never escapes from the Senate. Whatever one's view of the idea, any program based on sales tax revenue is suspect because of its lackluster support among legislators.

Fadeley and Hanlon have both endorsed the idea of reducing each home's tax burden by having the state pay a portion of the owner's school taxes. Oregon's commitment to progressive taxation - taking money from those most able to pay calls for driving the program

through the income tax mode.

Salem Democrat Peter Courtney, co-author of the most talked about sales tax plan, responds that it's not that simple.

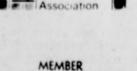
"Let's get it straight - we've ruined the income tax; we've destroyed it. Who's kidding who? The very rich can go out and hire lawyers and CPA's to find ways that they don't have to pay the income tax; the low-income people aren't paying it. So who's paying? The middle income people. It is no longer a progressive tax."

By definition, though, it's upperincome people who most use the capital gainst treatment. If money has to come from somewhere, is that not a good place to start?



In the photo published in the Observer, July 6, with the story 'Black studies hosts professors,' the second person from the left in the photo is Steven Millner, not Melaku Lakew. The Observer regrets the error.





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