

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Strachan strikes again!

With the appointment of Gretchen Kafoury to head the Bureau of Human Resources, Commissioner Margaret Strachan has again created controversy over her method of administration.

During the summer of 1982, associates of the Director of the Bureau of Human Resources, Irma Hepburn, learned she was to be terminated the following day—for reasons unknown. The "evaluation" meeting was postponed and the termination never occurred. However, this position was filed with Civil Service and Ms. Hepburn had to compete with all comers to retain her job. A national search did not result in a new appointment, but the position was vacated and Ms. Hepburn reassigned to a lesser (and temporary) position.

In the 1983-84 City budget the position reappeared—somewhat differently defined. After a suitable period had passed, the position was advertised and Gretchen Kafoury hired. Now, this wouldn't have seemed so unusual, perhaps, if there had not been a pervasive rumor that the appointment of Ms. Kafoury was planned even before Ms. Hepburn was removed. Already a position had been eliminated in order to remove a Black woman; now a new position was being created to hire a white woman.

This is not Commissioner Strachan's only administrative problem. Having safely deposed Ms. Hepburn, she began a campaign to eliminate Greg Gudger from the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (by eliminating his

position), and when that failed, gutted the staff and program. After months of nastiness and unconfirmed charges, much of the budget was restored.

Now, the Kafoury problem. Charges of irregularity in the process and procedures that favored Ms. Kafoury are being made. Information coming out of the Commissioner's Office and the Bureau conflict. Has Ms. Kafoury been hired or hasn't she?

This appointment will again leave bitterness and frustration over Commissioner Strachan's dealings with staff, her need to control, her attitude toward Blacks and other minorities.

We have high respect for Gretchen Kafoury, her political beliefs, and her Legislative record, but it is unfortunate that she is involved in this affair. Would she have prevailed in a fair and open competition for the position? Can she do an effective job when her appointment is suspect?

Was Irma Hepburn pushed out of the way so Ms. Kafoury could be hired? What about Barbara Patrick—a highly respected former Bureau employee who scored very close to Ms. Kafoury on a subjective test? Was this an opportunity for affirmative action, or at least for equity?

It would be a good idea for Ms. Kafoury to take a long look at the situation and her own background and determine whether this is really where a supporter of human rights and equality should be.

No plaque for Dr. King

Enter the Portland School District's Blanchard Education Center—the district's office and warehouse complex—and you will see a large metal plaque with a relief of Blanchard and an inscription dedicating the building to the former Superintendent.

At the King Neighborhood Facility, visitors are greeted by only a great emptiness. There is no sign of any kind on either of the two main entrances. And there is no picture and no dedication to Dr. Martin Luther King.

This is an oversight that cannot continue. The King Facility was built with Model Cities money, is owned by the City of Portland, and is operated by the Portland School District.

We recommend that the City and the School District, with assistance and guidance of the King, Vernon and Sabin Neighborhood Associations, either fund or obtain a grant to develop a suitable memorial plaque to Dr. King and signs for the building.

The King Neighborhood Facility and Martin Luther King Early Childhood Education Center are the only tributes to King in the City. King

Neighborhood Facility has been neglected in many ways. If the City/School District do not see fit to upgrade or expand the facility, they could at least ensure that it is a fit memorial to Dr. King. King's birthday, January 15th, would be a good day to dedicate the new plaque.

Long may it wave

When one sees Old Glory waving in the breeze the heartbeat quickens and the strains of "The land of the free and the home of the brave" or "His truth is marching on," go through the mind. The flag brings thoughts of purple mountains' majesty and fields of waving grain—home and loved ones.

But in Portland, following the flag leads me to a hamburger stand or a used car lot. In Portland, at least, there seems to be a competition to have the biggest and highest flag. So when you see that flag waving in the breeze, don't get ready to salute—get out your pocketbook.



WIN magazine



Victory For Dennis Brutus

by Dr. Manning Marable

Earlier this month, anti-apartheid critic Dennis Brutus, a world-famous poet, was finally granted political asylum in the U.S. after a difficult three-year campaign. The white supremacist regime in Pretoria would still like to silence Brutus permanently. The Reagan Administration almost accomplished this by repeatedly refusing to allow Brutus to live here in exile. The case reveals the direct political relationship between Reaganism and apartheid, as well as the necessity for political struggle to overturn both of these movements toward permanent inequality and racism.

Apartheid's problems with Brutus began almost three decades ago. As a young schoolteacher in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, he learned that the International Olympic Committee's charter excludes from competition any nation which practices racial or religious segregation. Brutus soon initiated a campaign in the press to force South African teams out of all international games. After many years, the effort produced progressive results which forced the regime to make token desegregation steps in athletics, but which also barred the racist state's teams from world competition.

Brutus was first "banned" by apartheid authorities in the early 1960s. His articles were not permitted to be published anywhere in the country. In 1963 Brutus was arrested for attending a meeting of South Africa's Olympic games committee. He was later shot in the back while attempting to escape, and was sentenced to do hard labor at Robben Island prison. Eventually, Brutus was permitted a one-way exit visa, and in 1971 he settled in the United

States. During his years of state torture, he began to write poetry; now his work is recognized as first rank within African literature.

During the past twelve years, he has been a professor of African and South African literature at Northwestern University, has published nine books, and has been a visiting scholar at Dartmouth and Amherst. His political criticisms of apartheid still continue: indeed, Brutus and I spoke together at the large anti-apartheid demonstration, New York in September, 1981. A former South African secret agent called Brutus "one of the twenty most dangerous South African political figures overseas."

The dilemma for Brutus began in 1980. Although Brutus was raised in South Africa and is considered its citizen, he was actually born in what is today Zimbabwe. When Brutus failed to obtain a Zimbabwe passport soon enough, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) seized upon this technicality to push for his expulsion. INS and the U.S. State Department claimed that Brutus "is being treated like anybody else." But the world knew that if Brutus was forced to return to Zimbabwe (or any Black nation near South Africa) that he would soon be assassinated.

Why did the Reagan Administration want to facilitate a political murder, to put the matter bluntly? It's instructive to note that Richard Allen, Reagan's long-time adviser and former national security chief, is currently a highly paid lobbyist for apartheid interests. Second, Reagan and his aides view South Africa as an "ally" in the worldwide containment of national liberation

struggles and the left. Sacrificing Brutus would have sent an unambiguous message of political solidarity to racist authoritarians.

Finally, South Africa is currently caught in the center of a new wave of political unrest. On August 21, the largest anti-government rally since the early 1960s was held in Capetown, uniting 7,000 Blacks, Indians, "coloreds" and anti-racist whites. The new coalition, termed the United Democratic Front, opposes new constitutional proposals which would still block equal voting rights for minorities. The Front's leader, colored minister Dr. Allan Boesak, calls for an end to "the brutalization of our people at the hands of the whites. South Africa belongs to all its people."

Dennis Brutus is still a living symbol of the new Front's multicultural democracy—and for that "crime," Washington and Pretoria desired to silence him permanently. Despite the recent victory, our struggle against racism at home and abroad still continues. Our commitment to equality and humanity is best expressed by Brutus himself:

Somehow we survive
and tenderness, frustrated, does
not wither.
Investigating searchlights rake
our naked unprotected contours;
over our heads the monolithic
decalogue
of fascist prohibition glowers
and teeters for a catastrophic fall;
But somehow we survive
severance, deprivation, loss...
most cruel, all our land is scarred
with terror,
rendered unlovely and
unloveable...
but somehow tenderness survives.

Letters to the Editor

Who supports sales tax?

To the editor:

I am today asking for Oregonians opposed to the sales tax to boycott the services of the U.S. National Bank of Oregon.

The U.S. National Bank of Oregon provided the 'seed money' that is pushing the sales tax through the legislature. Late last year, with proceeds from their 'Are you with US' campaign, \$30,000 was donated to a group of businessmen calling themselves "Taxpayers for a Better Economy" (TBE). TBE then provided the nucleus around which organizations representing Oregon's city councils, county commissions and school board members formed in a cabal to push the sales tax through the legislature.

While there is no broad public acceptance to the NO SALES TAX

campaign I have organized, with about 150 people contributing about \$700 (\$1,100 expended), we can't compete with the money of the banks and its big business friends.

Of the 150 contributors to NO SALES TAX, I noted that 18 made their donations on checks drawn on the U.S. National Bank of Oregon. This includes even the state Democratic Party of Oregon. Today in personal letters to each of them I am asking them and other Oregonians opposed to the sales tax to withdraw their accounts from the U.S. National Bank of Oregon. Since the other private banks probably take a similar position, I am suggesting they transfer their accounts to the Bank of North Dakota. The Bank of North Dakota is the only publically owned bank in the nation and is operated by the State of North

Dakota.

I personally have banked by mail with the Bank of North Dakota for over five years; the bank is located in Bismark, North Dakota. Checks are free, there is no service charge or minimum balance requirement, and the profits are not used against the interests of the people. Instead, the considerable revenues go to reduce the taxes of the people of the State of North Dakota."

Wally Priestley,
State Representative

The Observer welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters should be short, and must contain the writer's name and address (addresses are not printed). The Observer reserves the right to edit for length.



From The Boardroom

by Gladys McCoy Multnomah County Commissioner

The revised Minority and Female Business Enterprise (MBE/FBE) program of Multnomah County has been in operation for two years. To date there have been no complaints about implementation or its effectiveness, so I am persuaded it has been effective.

This program is a commitment of the Multnomah County Executive and Commissioners to justice and the equity in the County "market place." It is appropriate and justifiable that the County should take a leadership role in this area. Our combined minority and female goals remain 11 percent for construction projects; 0.5 percent for supplies and equipment; 11 percent of all trade or skilled services; and 9 percent of professional services.

These goals translate into minorities and females taking part in the mainstream of County business. For

example, as you pass over the Hawthorne Bridge, you may notice a new and safer curbing system; the metal fabrication of which came from a minority firm. When you enter the County's Elections Center this winter, you will find the building warmed with fuel distributed by a minority firm, which also fuels a number of other County facilities. Visit our Purchasing Office at the Ford Building and you will walk on carpeting furnished and installed by a female-owned business. Should you attend the open house for the new Justice Services Center (and I encourage you to do so) the sparkle in the sparkingly beautiful building will have been done by a minority maintenance company.

In short, these examples illustrate a viable minority and female business community participating with Multnomah County. I wish to com-

mend the County staff for their commitment and dedication, sometimes above the call of duty, to making this program work.

Attend the sixth annual Minority Business Opportunity Day, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday, October 12th, 1983, Memorial Coliseum, Assembly Hall. This will be an opportunity for community members to become more involved in the County's MBE/FBE Program, learn about the technical aides, participate in the question and answer sessions, study our program, and be educated about MBE/FBE program opportunities. Continued achievement of Multnomah County's MBE/FBE program goals and objectives depends on community input, support, and understanding as well as effective County management. I encourage your participation.

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