

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## "Economic recovery" - for whom?

The Reagan administration claims "economic recovery" is well underway. The time leading to the 1984 elections will be spent in touting that non-truth. It is the responsibility of the voter to look beyond the media-hype to the facts.

In spite of some decrease in unemployment, the October official unemployment rate for the U.S. was 8.8 percent—about 17.5 percent for Blacks and 7.5 percent for whites. Approximately 16 million Americans are among the reported unemployed or partially employed.

The U.S. employment statistics hide the fact that much of the reason for the drop in the unemployment rate was that over a half-million people gave up and quit looking for jobs, so were no longer counted in October. The number of Americans looking for work dropped from 10,423,000 to 9,886,000—a decline of 537,000. But there was also a drop of 17,000 in the number of persons employed. If the apparent improvement in the unemployment statistics really comes from people dropping out of the labor market, then there was no improvement at all.

The government estimates that there are 1,709,000 "discouraged workers" who are no longer working, but it does not include these people in its unemployment statistics; nor does it include part-time workers who want full-time work.

If all the "discouraged" and part-time workers were included, the U.S. unemployment rate for October would have been 12.7 percent (14.5 million unemployed) rather than 8.8 percent.

Ten years ago the "structural" unemployment rate—the rate of unemployed that is built

into the system—was three or four percent. Today the President's Council of Economic Advisors estimates structural unemployment to be about seven percent. Over 7 million people will never be able to find jobs, even after "full recovery."

The unemployment scale has gone up over the past 20 years, with each depression reaching a higher peak of unemployment than the one before.

Oregon's unemployment rate for October was 10.3 (seasonally adjusted), up from September. This means that 120,700 persons in Oregon who are seeking employment cannot find jobs. And Oregon's percentage decrease in unemployment from last year is partly because about 20,000 people left the state and thousands of others have given up looking for work and do not appear in the statistics.

Another indicator of the poor economy is the fact that wages have risen more slowly than in recent years in the four categories surveyed: office clerical (5.9 percent); computer related (6.1); skilled maintenance (2.7); and unskilled plant workers (0.8). The unskilled plant workers' wage increase is the smallest increase since statistics first became available in 1953; earnings for skilled maintenance workers showed a smaller increase than in any year for 20 years. The other two categories had the smallest gains since the early 1970s.

"Economic recovery" is a myth created for the election campaign. Wise voters will reject any talk of recovery until they and their neighbors have jobs and money in their pockets.

## Death lost in the translation

The opinion of a Chicano scholar that the killing of a Mexican worker by a Woodburn policeman might have resulted from a misunderstanding of language is one more proof that the American people's neglect of languages other than English is reprehensible. The professor believes the victim may have heard the officer's command—"Freeze"—as "Fuera" (Get out).

The numbers of Americans who have native languages other than English is rapidly growing. Trade and travel makes communication necessary. Yet most U.S. students never study a language other than English and most who do take

a year or two in college—too little and too late.

In most countries students study at least one foreign language—and sometimes several languages—beginning in the early grades and continuing through their school career. But the U.S. attitudes of superiority have given our students the notion that nothing should be required of them but English.

Foreign language study should be mandatory beginning in the early grades. Soon it will be as important to be able to communicate in other languages as it is to be able to operate a computer.



## Is this "justice for all"?

by Dr. Manning Marable

Today a Black man, Frank "Parky" Grace, is locked up in a federal penitentiary in Memphis, Tennessee. For almost a decade he has been imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. His only offense was his unyielding commitment to Black political rights and equality. Grace's ordeal is a testament to the systemic racism of the American criminal justice system.

Fifteen years ago, Grace was a well-known and respected Black activist in New Bedford, Massachusetts. After his discharge from the U.S. Army in December, 1968, he quickly became involved in a series of peace-oriented, human rights and Black Power organizations. He established links with the progressive African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau, and in 1971, opened a storefront office for Black Panther activities in New Bedford. His extensive community-based activities and programs were closely monitored by city, state, and federal authorities.

Because of Grace's political activities, police waged an illegal and vicious assault against him. New Bedford police arrested him at least 14 times in a four-year period, on a variety of absurd and unsubstantiated charges: "conspiracy to commit anarchy," "conspiracy to overthrow the government," "public drunkenness," and "conspiracy to commit murder." Grace was one of the victims of the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) which arrested, harassed and executed political dissidents. Grace's free shoe and clothing program for the city's poor, and a breakfast program for children, were viewed as dangerous and subversive. But the authorities still had

no evidence to put him behind bars permanently.

On August 8, 1972, Marvin Morgan of Providence, Rhode Island, and two other Black men came to New Bedford to purchase drugs. Getting into a scuffle with some local men, Morgan was shot and later died. Ross Grace, Parky's brother, committed the shooting; Parky Grace was on the other side of town that night, and learned of the incident a half-hour later. Grace was arrested, handcuffed, and was viciously beaten on the way to the station headquarters. Taken to a back room, he was forced to walk through a gauntlet of officers, who pounded him with fists and clubs. When Grace finally resisted, he was electric-shocked, blackjacked, and clubbed to the floor. His legs were pulled apart and he was repeatedly kicked in the groin; his hands were bloodied and even bitten. The brutal beating left Grace with permanent eye damage, permanent back and side spasms, chipped teeth, scars, bloody urine and testicle pain.

But the forces of "justice" left nothing to chance. Grace's supporters at Boston's Community Organization Toward a New Survival (C.O.N.S.) have evidence which indicates the bizarre "railroad" of Parky Grace. First, an all-white jury was selected. Defense witnesses who could have sworn that Grace was nowhere near the site of the shooting weren't subpoenaed. One eyewitness to the crime couldn't be located. The prosecution forced Morgan's friend, Eric Baker, who had outstanding drug charges pending against him in Rhode Island, to testify against Grace—and as a result, he was given only a six-month sentence and then was paroled. In

fact, both prosecution witnesses were given narcotics during the entire trial.

Ross Grace, the man who pulled the trigger, was given life with the possibility of parole in 15 years. Parky Grace, who was innocent, received "Natural Life Imprisonment"—absolutely no parole. Ross Grace has admitted that he shot Morgan, and that his brother had nothing to do with the slaying. But since January 24, 1974, Parky Grace has been behind bars.

The U.S. Justice Department, the New Bedford police, and the local district attorney all know that Grace is innocent. But the reason for his continuing punishment is political. At Walpole State Prison in Massachusetts, he was active in a Black prisoner's caucus. In the mid-1970s he was an advisor with the National Prisoner Rights Association, which lobbied for humane reforms inside prisons. When Grace worked with several sympathetic college professors and the American Friends Service Committee to offer college courses and self-awareness workshops, penal authorities were alarmed. Grace was sent to Memphis, and four other prisoners who were involved in his constructive projects were transferred to other federal penitentiaries.

Despite the beatings, the torture, and the injustice of his imprisonment, Parky Grace retains his humanity—a commitment to struggle. Can we afford to let even one person like this be sacrificed? Contact C.O.N.S., P.O. Box 1168, Boston, MA 02103, and contribute to the continued legal battle to vindicate Parky Grace. His ordeal is, in no small way, the political battle for justice for all of the oppressed.



## From the Boardroom

by Gladys McCoy, County Commissioner

You may recall that on May 31, 1983, that I wrote about the Future of Local Governments Groups, a coalition of local elected officials from the City, County, Gresham, Metropolitan Officers, and Councilor from East County. The purpose of that group was to determine and gain consensus of local government. We all recognized that status quo was neither desirable nor possible and we wanted to initiate direction change and organization in an orderly and timely fashion.

After a year, the options that surfaced were the formation of a new city or comprehensive annexation of unincorporated East Multnomah County. The Boundary Commission, a state agency, is the channel through which both options had. The Boundary Commission is the determining agency about the validity of each proposal.

The following is the statement I made before that body which represents the thinking of the Future of Local Governments Group:

Boundary Commission Members:

I am writing as chairperson of the Future of Local Governments Group (FLGG) to comment on the proposed Fairview consolidation proposal being reviewed by the Boundary Commission. I believe that FLGG's discussion and efforts relate directly to the issues faced by the Commission as you analyze the Fairview proposal.

FLGG was formed in the Fall of 1982 to facilitate finding solutions to the growing service needs of mid-Multnomah County. FLGG membership included representatives from the Cities of Portland, Gresham and the Metropolitan Service District.

To address these service needs, FLGG agreed on two objectives: to stimulate public interest in resolving the area's long-standing service problems; develop political consensus within the County on the best solutions to those problems.

Two clear options surfaced during the six months of FLGG study and discussion: (1) services provided through annexation to existing full service cities, and (2) formation of a new city to be consolidated with Fairview.

The FLGG Technical Advisory Committee has developed criteria to evaluate these and other options. Since FLGG's overall purpose was to solve the mid-County area's serious service deficiencies, these

criteria were designed to measure each option's capability to provide needed services. However, we never saw the new city proposal until it was presented to you. The standards applied in your own staff report closely resemble the FLGG criteria.

I have read the Boundary Commission Staff Report on the Fairview consolidation. Ken Martin and the entire staff are to be commended for their excellent and proficient work. The staff report clearly points out what I have discovered through my efforts with the FLGG group—that the consolidation proposal does not meet FLGG's criteria for solving the area's service problems. The proposal does not ensure that service needs of citizens in mid-Multnomah County will be met, either in the short-term or long-term. Neighborhood parks, for example, are assumed to be adequate at today's levels. We know better. Sanitary sewers, needed to prevent health problems and promote new job opportunities, are not addressed. That issue was the most critical as we began our deliberations a year ago, and yet the proposers of the new city denied the importance to the city and failed to deal with it then.

In contrast to the shortcomings of the Fairview proposal, concrete steps are being taken by existing entities to provide needed services in mid-County:

Gresham and Portland have adopted urban services policies that commit them to carrying out the planning and investments required to fulfill the area's service demand. Multnomah County, Gresham, Portland, and Troutdale have successfully pursued a \$5.8 million Economic Development Administration grant to help solve the sewer problems in mid-County.

Citizens and property owners in two areas—the Columbia South Shore Industrial district and the Argay Terrace residential neighborhood—have worked to build the consensus required to bring about service solutions. In both areas, property owner groups have collected enough signatures to accomplish triple majority annexations and additional property owner annexation efforts are underway in other neighborhoods.

The decision you have before you is obviously a critical one. Some people will tell you that the proper (easy) decision is to let "the people" vote. No one will argue against peo-

ple having a choice, but please remember that this will be a decision of lasting regional impact. The future economic, fiscal and social health of the entire region depends upon a comprehensive solution to the Urban Service needs in mid-County.

The Boundary Commission's responsibility is not simply to pass along inadequate proposals to "the voters," but to protect and further the interests of all residents and existing jurisdictions in the County.

Because the proposal before you does not provide for a comprehensive solution to the problems, does not provide the kind and level of services the citizens deserve, I believe it is your responsibility to reject it and thus allow and encourage existing full-service cities to continue their service delivery efforts.

These existing cities have shown both the willingness and the capabilities to solve the service problems with which we have been wrestling for so long. I'm convinced, in fact, excited, that through working together, we are now on the verge of a renaissance of economic and community growth in mid-County. Let's let the neighborhoods and the existing full-service cities get on with making it happen.

The Boundary Commission voted November 28 to reject the new city idea. This now means other neighborhoods and East County must determine if they wish to be annexed to one of the principal cities or remain in unincorporated Multnomah County.

No doubt there will be more to this saga and I will want to keep you informed.

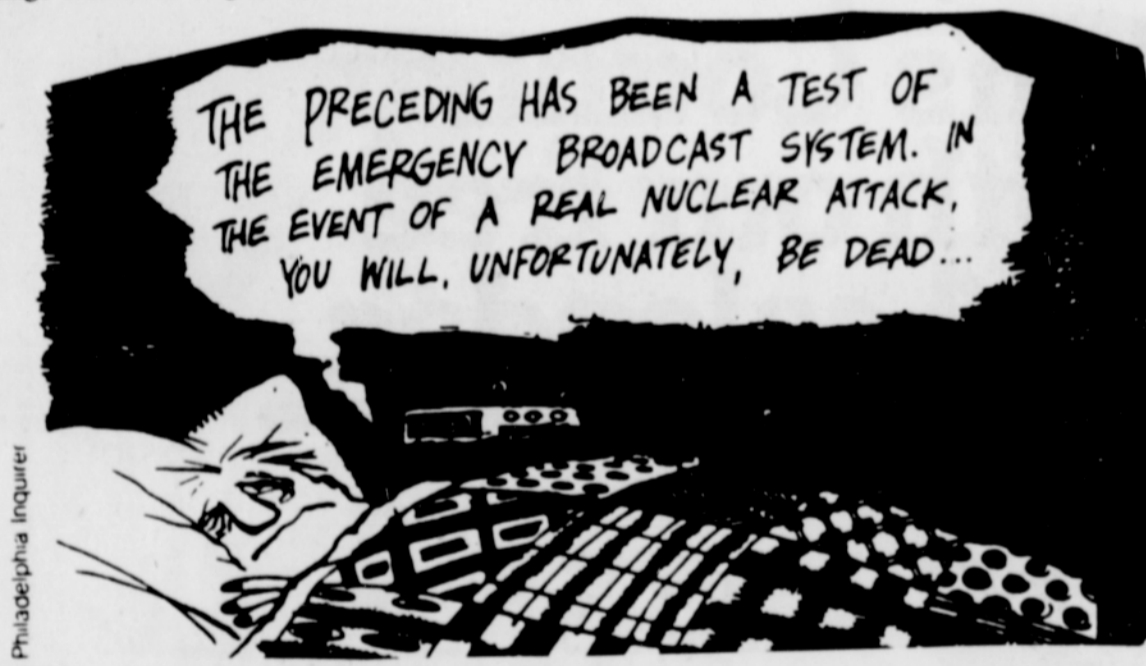
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