

Press role
questioned

Below



Daisy Hayes
commissioner

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Wildcats
will howl!

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Feds order Hopsing 'minority' decertification



Spring has sprung at last! Goldie A. Irby and his mother Lamodia A. Irby take time out to enjoy the sunshine.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

The Oregon Department of Transportation was notified this week that it will lose credit against its minority business enterprise requirements for work done by Hopsing Construction Company. The Surface Transportation Act, which allots federal funds for highway construction, has a ten percent minority business enterprise requirement.

ODOT was also advised to decertify Hopsing as a Minority Business Enterprise/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise immediately.

The state was amply warned of Hopsing's questionable status when other governmental bodies refused to certify or recertify Hopsing. In January of 1981 and January of 1984, the Washington Department of Transportation denied certification; in August of 1983, TriMet denied recertification; in October 9, 1983, the City of Portland denied recertification, stating to Christopher Scarrott, the minority co-owner, "Your management of the company does not go beyond pro-forma ownership."

Hopsing was investigated during October of 1983 by the Civil Rights Office of the Federal Highway Administration, at the request of

minority business people, and it recommended that Hopsing be decertified because it did not meet the federal criteria as a minority-owned and -controlled business enterprise. The Regional Administrator recommended decertification to the State.

ODOT responded with its own investigation and, using substantially the same information gained by the federal department, determined that Hopsing should be recertified.

Here the waters were muddied as Deputy Highway Administrator in the Portland office, Louis N. McDonald, recommended to the Region that it override its own civil rights office's recommendation and conclude that ODOT's actions to recertify was "reasonable and proper."

Subsequent to this decision, the U.S. Department of Transportation conducted an investigation at the request of the Labor-Minority Business Coalition and found that "Hopsing Construction Company, after being in operation for eight years, is not financially and managerially independent of its non-minority owner, R.N. Hatch, nor the majority construction com-

pany, R.A. Hatch." The investigation found that R.A. Hatch's "actions far exceed the Department's policy to encourage prime contractors to assist MBE's/DBE's in the areas of bonding, insurance, loans, etc., during the initial years in operation."

This decision upholds the recommendation of the local civil rights office.

The question that remains to be asked is: Why did McDonald override the recommendation of his civil rights officer? Why did the Region accept McDonald's recommendation? This question is even more significant now that the Secretary of Transportation has determined that the civil rights officer was right.

What is the role of the civil rights office? Who is the regulator and monitor over the state if it is not the civil rights office?

If the civil rights office's judgement had been accepted and the state had been forced to decertify Hopsing last October, all the injured parties would have been in better position now.

Department of Transportation policies state that when a recipient (ODOT) has certified an MBE and

the certification is overturned, the recipient may not count the dollar amount of the work performed by the decertified MBE toward its overall goal."

The State must now give up approximately \$500,000 credit toward its MBE/DBE goal for this fiscal year (The \$8 million paid to Hopsing during the 1982-83 fiscal year will not be removed). Although ODOT should have no problem replacing the \$500,000, had this situation lingered it could have caused serious problems: for, if the State cannot maintain its 10 percent requirement, it could be in danger of losing federal funds or facing repayment.

The affair also harms the credibility of the Federal Highway Administration which has begun to move more effectively after years of inactivity when it comes to protecting minority rights.

The overriding benefit of the decertification, however, is that it will serve notice to majority contractors that their minority requirements must be met with legitimate minority firms.

Hopsing Construction was established in 1975 by Suzanne C. (Please turn to page 6, column 3)

Jesse Jackson gains voter support

by Chuck Goodmacher

Support for the Rainbow Coalition presidential campaign of Jesse Jackson skyrocketed during the last week as Jackson won the South Carolina and Mississippi primaries, nearly won in Kentucky and received a very strong twenty percent of the vote in Illinois.

Although major media outlets and the other two candidates still characterize the fight for the Democratic nomination as "a two-man race", Jackson's voter support

appears to be on the rise. Jackson's solid third place finish in Illinois Tuesday, the first primary in a major industrial state, is expected to be followed by strong finishes in upcoming primaries in New York (April 3) and Pennsylvania (April 10), according to campaign staffer Arnold Pinkney.

An estimated seventy-five percent of the Black vote in Illinois went for Jackson, with the remainder split between Hart and Mondale. "The Black vote," said Jackson early Wednesday, "is the heart of the Rainbow Coalition, but we will not stop until we embrace all the people of this nation."

Speaking alongside Chicago Mayor Harold Washington, Sunday, Jackson criticized Walter Mondale for saying the race is a contest between himself and Colorado Senator Gary Hart.

"Mr. Mondale has said this is a two-man race," Jackson said, according to Associated Press reports. "I'm a man, and I'm running. So, if he (Mondale) is going to drop out, he ought to be more direct about it."

Mayor Washington compared Jackson's campaign to his own electoral experience last year, saying, "We set this country on fire. We also understand that some things have to be done and some messages have to be sent," added Washington. "What is the message? Rebirth and reform of this country and the Democratic party."

The union vote in Illinois was even closer than the vote for the entire population. Despite the AFL-CIO endorsement of Mondale, he received only thirty-nine percent of organized labor's vote, according to a CBS exit poll. The same poll showed Jackson and Hart with roughly the same support: twenty-six percent for Jackson and twenty-eight percent for Hart.

Support of Jackson among non-Black minority groups also appears to be on the rise. Before the strong Jackson showing of the last week, he led other contenders in a survey of Puerto Rican voters. Thirty-two percent said they would vote for Jackson while only about twenty percent indicated support for Mondale, according to the survey con-

ducted by the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy of Washington, D.C.

The CBS Tuesday evening news delegate count showed a strong lead for Mondale with 542 delegates; 342 for Hart and 72 delegates for Jackson. Three hundred and two remain uncommitted.

Fisher resigns

Gloria Fisher, who has been Managing Editor of the *Portland Observer* since 1976, has resigned effective March 31st. Ms. Fisher has been with the *Observer* since 1971, shortly after its establishment in October of 1970.

Alfred L. Henderson, publisher, announced that Al Williams will be General Manager and will share management responsibilities with Gary Ann Garnett.

Ms. Fisher plans to leave for Nicaragua, where she will do research and pursue a career as an independent journalist. That nation is in the process of holding elections, institutionalizing its government and developing a new constitution.

Minority capital legislation filed

Congressman Charles Rangel, D-New York, ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, the committee responsible for introducing all tax legislation, along with Congressman Parren Mitchell, D-Maryland, Chairman of the House of Representatives Small Business Committee, have introduced the single largest minority capital bill ever introduced to the Congress, The Minority Investment

Tax Act of 1984" (MINTA).

"MINTA" will attract equity capital from broad sectors of American businesses and individuals for investments into minority owned businesses. It is a private enterprise initiative which will not require government budget line appropriations and as such should get broad support from the Senate and House of Representatives.

"MINTA" will allow non-recognition of capital gains from sales of capital assets if the proceeds are reinvested into minority owned companies through a designated "minority investment fund".

This legislative initiative by Rangel and Mitchell is hailed as the single most important minority legislation ever introduced into the Congress of the United States of America.

American press plays role in domestic and foreign repression

"The American press does not reflect the American mind—it reflects the views of established power which in turn seeks to mold the American mind to accept its prejudices. The American press seeks to shape public opinion, or even replace public opinion by fostering and presenting a unanimity of views which it then offers as public opinion. . . ." James Aronson, a co-founder of the *National Guardian* wrote in his book, "The Press and the Cold War".

The American press serves up the same diet to readers in all parts of the nation—urban and rural. They are offered the same columns—James Reston, Joseph Alsop, William F. Buckley—the same wire service news, comics, cartoons, puzzles, etc.

"It follows they will tend to think alike and their thinking will be encouraged to support the "national interest". The national interest is interpreted for them by the managers of the syndicate and the owners of the newspapers, businessmen who identify themselves, because of their conglomerate financial concerns with national policies that protect these concerns. . . ."

Analysis

In addition to Aronson's revelation of the role of the press in creating and fostering anti-communism and its support of

militarism, the role of the press in creating and perpetuating racism has been clearly revealed by numerous Black authors.

In the *Newhouse* papers of March 18th, there appeared an extensive article on the Reagan administration's response to "low-intensity warfare". This article, sub-headlined, "U.S. found unprepared for conflict", outlined the Reagan administration's plans to intensify covert war, intelligence gathering at home and abroad, political assassination, "dirty-tricks", etc.

Far from sounding the alarm to the American people that their government is preparing for political repression at home and more far-reaching military intervention abroad, the article prepares the

scenario for the "need" for such operations.

"A new form of warfare—viewed by the Reagan administration as more immediately threatening than a nuclear holocaust—is posing a severe new challenge to the security of the United States at home and its interests abroad," the article says.

"Called 'low-intensity' warfare, it encompasses conflict ranging from terrorist bombings and hostage-taking to brush fire wars and lengthy insurgencies—all cases in which the United States is ill-prepared to respond.

"Experts expect the new form of warfare will face the United States with a stark choice: Either adopt the weapons of low-intensity conflict (including more intelligence gathering and covert military

operations), or withdraw from the international arena into a 'fortress America'."

The American people, the article implies, must accept U.S. adventurism abroad—covert wars in Central America and Africa, use of disinformation, political assassination, psychological warfare, sabotage or leave the international scene and live, afraid, in isolation.

These covert wars will be fought, for the most part, in underdeveloped third world countries where U.S. corporations have a stake in the resources. Robert H. Kupperman of the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies is quoted ". . . the United States must fight to maintain its access to oil and mineral riches and its vital maritime

shipping lanes."

One administration spokesman quoted in the article said, "We have taken an archaic view of warfare. . . . We need to have a department of dirty tricks, to use disinformation. And we should sanction murder as a national policy—tightly controlled and not used very often. This is a situation of war."

The article emphasizes that the Pentagon is not yet prepared for fighting this type of warfare.

"To shift U.S. perceptions and strategies toward this new reality is vital, many experts say," the article reports, and this is the role of the press.

Surveillance at home

"U.S. faces threat at home", a sub-title says. Yonah Alexander, (Please turn to page 2, column 4)