

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Tarzan mentality plagues PSU

The exclusion of Africa in the curriculum of Portland State University's International Studies program is academic racism — pure and simple.

One would assume that a modern Urban University would incorporate one of the richest continents in the world into the lesson plan. A continent where the oldest human remains were found and a continent where civilization began.

If this were a university in England during the 1950s, we could understand this colonialistic view of the world. But we are living on the edge of the 21st Century and racism in any form will not be tolerated.

The faculty members who designed this program were operating the way they were trained, for all practical purposes, by academician who wanted to keep the Ivory Tower white.

In an era where communication technology can bring the famines in Africa into the living rooms of millions, the exclusion of Africa in the curriculum will reinforce a "Tarzan attitude" of Africa that is perpetuated by ignorance.

The faculty and members of the State Board of Higher Education (who approved this exclu-

sion) have elevated racism to new academic heights while constructing an economic rationale for racism by blaming budgetary constraints for its exclusion.

Certainly, if Africa was looked at through unbiased eyes, one could trace the history of Europe's development and Africa's underdevelopment. One would discover a close correlation between the two. Also, it could be demonstrated how the European slave trade and the stigma of colonialism are central to Africa's underdevelopment and technical stagnation.

These questions and answers need to surface and re-surface if our youth are to develop past the narrow, racist educational foundation of their predecessors.

The current curriculum in PSU's International Studies deserves to be altered, and if necessary, vetoed by the Governor. Our college students would be better served by a curriculum that teaches them to respect, value and learn from other cultures. Exclusion, isolation and racism are not what our educational tax dollars are budgeted for.



The church, the state, and poverty

Along the Color Line by Dr. Manning Marable



The Roman Catholic bishops' recently released first draft on the U.S. economy is one of the most important statements on poverty and the role of government in combating social inequality in many decades. Although the document will probably be revised during the next year before becoming an official statement for American Catholics, certain tenets will remain. The statement, first and foremost, is a lucid philosophical rejection of the Reagan administration's economic policies. It calls upon the nation to "make a major new policy commitment" to cut unemployment rates in half with programs which include massive Federal spending to create jobs. The draft places the Church on the side of organized labor by its advocacy of unionization, which would "prevent intimidation of workers and provide remedies... for unfair labor practices." It criticizes the Reagan-backed arms race for taking "resources away from the task of creating a more just and productive economy." And it calls for the achievement of "economic democracy: the creation of an order that guarantees the minimum conditions of human dignity in the economic sphere for every person." In its humanistic scope and vision, it affirms the primacy of people over private profits.

The most interesting political feature about the bishop's statement was the furor it evoked before it was first released. Following the old football theory that "the best defense is a good offense," 27 prominent Catholic lay people formed their own economic commission. Something of a who's who among conservative Catholics, the lay commission which included former Treasury Secretary William E. Simon, rightwing ideologue Michael Novak, and former Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig — issued a plodding and predictable high sounding and capitalist exploitation. months ago, Catholic corporate executives began to criticize the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' (NCCB) drafting committee and its chair, Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland. Leon T. Kendall, chairman of the Mortgage Guaranty Insurance Corporation, warned that the "bishops will advocate social planning that doesn't work. I will read the bishops' letter respectfully, un-

derstand its heritage, and will then go about my business." *Fortune* magazine attacked the NCCB's "economics" as being "well to the left of every (presidential) candidate you could name except maybe Jesse Jackson. The document it produces will be a paean to planning." The bishops' drift toward the left was one of self-interest, *Fortune*, argued. "Socialism gives them a role to play, while capitalism — reliance on impersonal market forces — leaves them out in the cold." Archbishop Weakland reminded conservative critics that the NCCB had issued "periodic statements on the economy" previously, and that this latest pastoral was simply "a modest beginning to a continual examination of how economic issues affect our whole socio-political fabric and of the importance of keeping the ethical and moral dimensions present as an integral part of such discussion."

As welcomed at the bishops' draft document may be for the millions of Americans who suffer from unemployment, poverty, and Reagan's budget cuts in social programs, the bishops' do not go far enough in isolating the theoretical and practical problems of capitalism. Any serious critique of the contemporary socio-economic crisis must unearth the roots of capitalism as a social system, a type of political economy with certain unequal characteristics. As Black American theologian Cornel West observes, "Capitalism is an antidemocratic mode of social organization in that it requires the removal of production from those engaged in production. Capitalism is a particular system of production in which capital accumulation for profit maximization is achieved at the expense of excluding democratic participation (of those principally responsible for production) in investment decisions." In racially stratified societies, capitalists invariably pit the interests of one racial group against another, in the effort to lower the general wage rate of both groups. Within culture, the legitimacy of private ownership and the market are reinforced by the "values and sensibilities, institutions and associations" which mold human interaction. As West notes, capitalist civilization's "concrete consequences... are not only poverty, disease, lack of self-esteem, and de-

spair but also the suppression of individuality (or self-realization within community)."

"Freedom" in capitalist terms means the freedom of the marketplace, the ability of some individuals to obtain profits from the labor power of many. The free market is impersonal; it offers no guarantees that anyone will succeed; risks and rewards drive the system forward. But the Christian heritage is profoundly personal; the Christian cannot turn his/her back to poverty, starvation, illiteracy. Social welfare and a basic minimum existence for all is both moral and just.

The inherent inequality of capitalism presents fundamental choices for Americans, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. The problem of poverty is great, as the bishops' letter suggests, but even greater is the fundamentally unequal distribution of wealth, economic resources and power in our society. Social justice is an illusion in a society such as ours, in which one percent of the population owns one third of all the wealth, and the bottom 45 percent own barely two percent of the wealth. It is not merely a question of jobs, as the bishops imply, but the necessity for labor to control the basic productive centers of society, to extend the prerogative of majority rule to the process of production itself.

The need to merge religious faith and the struggle for economic and social justice is nothing new for Afro-American Christians. As West argues, Christianity's deep appeal to Blacks and other oppressed people is because "it looks at the world from the perspective of those below." If God is the architect of the universe, the flow of history inevitably serves the forces of social justice and humanity. Martin Luther King also observed, "There is a law in the moral world — a silent, invisible imperative, akin to the laws in the physical world — which reminds us that life will work only in a certain way." the statement by the Catholic bishops, although limited in these respects, makes the same point.

Dr. Manning Marable teaches political sociology at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

Letters to the Editor

Jordan's endorsement

To the Editor,

After much consideration, I have decided not to endorse in any form or manner a candidate in the upcoming election to fill my former position.

I am sure that the Editorial Board of the Oregonian misrepresented my position because I never said that my position should be a Black seat.

I was highly offended by the misrepresentation, but found some consolation in being reminded that the people of Portland know I never made race an issue. I never asked anyone for support based on my color. And that was the case in each of my elections.

I was asked my personal preference and I gave it. If asked again, I would give the same response. My preference is that my successor be a Black because I feel that a Black would compliment the other members of the City Council with:

1. A certain perspective and sensitivity.

2. A presence on the Council that would make a very strong statement about our City and our State.

As an example of this, take a look at my selection of staff. At the time of my departure from the City, I had on my staff a total of 11 employees. Of those, five were Black, one was Asian and one was Hispanic. Of those, seven were women. Now take a serious look at other Commissioner's offices, including the Mayor. Better yet, examine the new incoming administration.

3. I was a role model for other minorities and a pioneer for those to follow. When I ran for public office the first time, that age old question, "Is Portland ready?" cropped up. This time, I doubt if it ever even surfaced.

I appreciate the vote of confidence from those of you who are waiting to hear my endorsement but it is only fair that I demonstrate like confidence in your judgment. I have trusted it for three elections and you have never let me down, so I am confident that you will make the right choice

CHARLES R. JORDAN

Time for giving

To the Editor,

We cordially invite you to attend a Christmas program entitled "A Time of Giving," sponsored by the Northeast Community Relation team of Pacific Northwest Bell, presenting the Ronnie Wright Singers and Friends, Saturday, December 8, 1984 at 7:00 p.m. the performance will be at the Northwest Service Center, 1819 N.W. Everett St. Admission will be a donation of foodstuff for the Oregon Food Share.

LARRY MARKS
Program Coordinator

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be typed or neatly printed and signed with the author's name and address (addresses are not published). We reserve the right to edit for length. Mail to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

The Governor announced a proposed sales tax with a corresponding decrease in property taxes. The Street Beat Team asked, "Would you support a sales tax with this provision?"



Jesse Jarman
Warehouseman

"I would like to hear more about property tax relief. I don't believe a sales tax would reduce property taxes."



Latifa Wiley
Clothes Designer

"No, we are taxed enough. they say a lot of stuff, make a lot of promises, but never keep any."



J. Green
Student

"I live in Washington and go to school here. Sales taxes are fine. It seems like it would benefit property owners."



Jerry Daniels
Carpenter

"I'm from back East and we have a sales tax but not a high state tax. It would not matter to me."



Jacqueline Williams
Housewife

"I would support it if my property taxes would go down, but that's a big 'IF.' You can't trust Salem. they say one thing and do another."



Cher VanMeter
Janitor

"It would not help me much as a renter. A sales tax makes it difficult to shop because we would not know the price."

Portland Observer



The Portland Observer (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, 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.



283-2486



Alfred L. Henderson, Editor/Publisher
Al Williams, General Manager

National Advertising Representative
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
New York