

EDITORIAL/OPINION

New labels: same product

Politics '84 replaced the faces at City Hall and in the city's bureaucracy. But the end results remain just as unfair, discriminatory and regressive as if the old administration never left.

Smiling, with a rose in one hand and the city's machine in another, the new administration has dealt with crisis after crisis: a budget deficit, layoffs in essential services, and the Stevenson tragedy. Unfortunately, the decisions made and implemented are no different than the previous administration.

Affirmative Action are just words. There has been no real improvement nor are there any signs indicative of changing de facto discrimination in city employment.

Choosing the nation's first female police chief

created great P.R. for Portland. And whatever benefits derived from this selection were choked away with the life of Tony Stevenson. And there is every indication to believe that the incompetency involved in Stevenson's death will remain on the force as the police union maintains various ingredients of a police state in Portland.

Some members of this new administration are ignorant, insensitive and elitist. If Portland is ever to progress, we must remain mindful of the thorns in the City of Roses and work toward a collective solution. A different face in politics has not produced a different policy. And the illusion of liberalism in Portland is slowly lifting to reveal the realities of racism. The new administration is a perfect example of a different label with the same product.



U.S. helping South Africa

Along the Color Line by Dr. Manning Marable

A third argument against divestment is that it could lead to "disinvestment" — the total withdrawal of all U.S. firms from South Africa. Disinvestment would increase Black unemployment rates, which in turn could create severe social tensions and accelerate political repression against Blacks and other nonwhites. But this fails to take into account that the white workers are disproportionately represented in U.S.-owned firms, and that the total labor-force employed by such companies is less than two percent of all adult workers. What do the majority of Black trade union leaders who have no ties to the apartheid regime say about U.S. disinvestment? Leaders of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions in South Africa, as well as the unaffiliated Black unions such as the General Workers Union and the South African Allied Workers Union state that total American divestiture would not destroy apartheid, but that it is absolutely essential in putting political pressure on the white minority regime. As Thembi Mkalipi, chairperson of FOSATU's Chemical Workers Industrial Branch in Port Elizabeth, stated in 1984, "apartheid has been promoted by the employers and the government to divide the white workers from the Black workers. Whites see themselves in a privileged position because they are favored by apartheid. . . ." The "only way" to build white-Black unity in the workplace is when "there's no more whites-only jobs." Divestment would make it more difficult for the apartheid political economy to guarantee privileges and low unemployment rates to whites. It would certainly increase the cost of spare parts for existing machinery, curtailing some of the surplus which goes to whites. Sullivan

signatory companies, as a whole, still preserve the "Jim Crow" system of whites in top positions and perpetuate African inequality.

Critics of divestment are quick to warn that such action is "irrational" because it would disrupt institutional portfolios. College boards of trustees could be charged with "fiduciary irresponsibility." A clean bill of health on apartheid might bankrupt institutions, some have claimed. But as of 1984, 40 universities had invested more than \$175 million in stocks linked to apartheid. Between 1979 and 1984, divestment legislation was passed in the states of Massachusetts, Michigan, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and in other cities and states amounting to another \$400 million. As of December 1984, divestment legislation had been introduced in 44 states; and the National Conference of Black Mayors has urged all U.S. mayors and city councils to remove public funds from banks with apartheid connections.

There is also a considerable body of evidence which indicates that divestment from South Africa can, under certain conditions, actually increase the value of an institution's holdings. According to Nancy Elliot, director of investments at Michigan State University, the university's portfolio had earned an additional \$1 million between June, 1980 and April, 1983, after comparing the current value of companies sold vs. the market value of companies purchased. Joan Bavaria, director of Franklin Research and Development Corporation of Boston, stated in 1983 that research of the earnings records of investment held by the city of Washington, D.C., "demonstrates that the companies not in South Africa had a better earnings record than those that are in South Africa and that a comparison

of stock price performance showed that over time corporations without South African investments did not do as well as those involved in South Africa."

There are really few arguments against divestment from apartheid which hold up after sustained examination. But we must be clear that economic disengagement will not lead to the immediate end of apartheid. I personally favor the passage of H.R. 997 sponsored by Congressman Ronald V. Dellums, which would prohibit holding any current or making future investments in South Africa either in the public or private sector, and would deny tax credits and deductions for all U.S. firms doing business in South Africa, over the more moderate H.D. 1460/60 635 Gray-Kennedy bill, which prohibits new investments and bank loans to the South African public sector. Yet even the Dellums bill, which will not pass, would only severely cripple the regime. South Africa is a society experiencing fundamental social change, in which a Black majority government ultimately will emerge — a fact of political life which no outside force will halt. Divestment can only help to accelerate the transition to democracy; investments-with-'reforms' may only retard this process.

The debate over divestment is actually secondary to a larger question: should certain humanistic moral and political principles guide any institution's investment policies? Divestment from apartheid is only a first step toward a policy of "people before profits."

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

Letters to the Editor

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are Black). Joyce Harris raised a good point in her statement, but some police in Portland also treat non-colored people very badly — not just people of color.

THOMAS E. QUIGLEY

Disappointment

To the Editor,

The Portland Observer should be commended for its coverage of the "Tony" Stevenson travesty.

However, upon reading the article entitled "Herndon discusses Black issues," in your June 5th edition, I couldn't help but come away with a sincere feeling of disappointment.

Having the utmost respect for Ron and Nathaniel Scott, the article seemed to add their voices to the growing chorus of "Let's get back to business as usual," and suggested the final chapter on the life and death of L. D. "Tony" Stevenson had been written.

If this is true, it is indeed a sad day for Portland's Afro-American community.

What! No boycott of at least the Shell Station that at least contributed to the negative outcome of the whole affair? Even a candlelight vigil would have been appropriate the night the grand jury returned its dual verdict — one for the record and the other for the public — to mourn the death of justice toward the African-American community.

I see no redeeming actions being tak-

en on the part of the City of Portland and/or the so-called leadership of the northeast community that warrants the carte blanche being handed those in a position of responsibility.

To my knowledge there has been no commitment made by the Mayor, Chief Harrington or the District Attorney, or anyone else for that matter, to even review their hiring practices with regard to the police department.

Chief Harrington has demonstrated from the very beginning her unwillingness or inability to effectively orchestrate and coordinate her efforts within the police department or the community.

The entrenchment of the reactionary elements within the police department and Chief Harrington's compassion for the community totally neutralized her position and subsequently added insult to injury. And what can be expected from a police department with a history of corruption, negligence and insensitivity toward the African-American community.

Nathaniel Scott's article and Ron Herndon's comments, along with other so-called "leaders" of the community, indicated that when "Tony" died as a result of, at least, civil or criminal negligence, so did the Black community, in my opinion. Have we resigned ourselves to live without justice so we can live with the White man?

SHAHEED HAAMID
Communications & Media
Coordinator of
Masjid Muhammad, Portland

South Africa

To the Editor,

I read my first issue of the Portland Observer last Sunday after mass. It is a very informative newspaper. It was the May 29th issue.

The article by Nathaniel Scott was of great interest to me because, back in 1978, I spent several months in Southern Africa visiting family friends that were missionaries. While in downtown Johannesburg (South Africa) I happened upon a security police action. A Black male about 35 years old was getting the hell beat out of him by two policemen.

I moved toward the scene to take some photographs. The two policemen then grabbed at me and my camera. They pushed me around a bit, calling me names.

The policemen were both very upset after checking my I.D., then started calling me and President Carter names. At that point they released me and told me to beat it.

One of the policemen was white while the other was Black (50 percent of the South African security police

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