

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Arbitrator ruling an insult to Black community

The ruling by Arbitrator Paul Hanlon, reinstating the two officers who sold the "Don't Choke 'Em, Smoke 'Em" T-shirts is another insult to the Black community.

Hanlon's ruling last Wednesday means that officers Paul Wickersham and Richard Montee can return as police officers after they were fired by Mayor Bud Clark for selling the T-shirts in the downtown Justice Center on the day of Lloyd D. Stevenson's funeral.

Stevenson, who was married and the father of five children, died when police applied the carotid-artery hold on him in April during a disturbance outside of a convenience store. A public inquest jury ruled that Stevenson's death was the result of criminal negligent homicide. Later a Multnomah County Grand Jury refused to return an indictment on any of the four officers involved in Stevenson's death.

This angered many Portlanders, especially Black Portlanders. The Black community's anger was justified, when one examines the history of the behavior of individual officers on the Portland Police Bureau towards Black citizens. The opossum incident, the Special Investigation Division scandal, the killing of Alberta Tate and the T-shirt incident. Besides the above, law-abiding Blacks must contend with the daily harassment by a group of individual officers, who use their badges as shields to commit criminal and racist acts upon the Black community.

Hanlon's ruling reinstating the two officers did not take into consideration the feelings of the Black community. If it had, he would not have ruled the way he did. Mr. Hanlon would have seen a community that has been victim to excessive use of force, racism, and harassment by individual police officers for years.

This lack of justice for Black citizens in Port-

land has reached a critical stage. City officials, the criminal justice system, and the police cannot expect the Black community to continue being victims of bad police officers. The reinstatement of Wickersham and Montee has proven to many Black Portlanders that their rights are not as important as other citizens living in the City.

Ora L. Nunley, President of the Portland branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) stated, "It is an outrage that the decent citizens of Portland have no protection against a small group of ignorant, misguided and sometimes evil individuals who, after pinning on the badge of public authority and swearing to uphold the law, abuse the public's trust."

For Hanlon to say the firing of two officers by Mayor Clark was excessive, further proves his lack of consideration to the feelings of the Black community. The selling of the T-shirts by Wickersham and Montee on the day of Stevenson's funeral was a sick, and appalling act. Such behavior warrants dismissal from the Bureau. To entrust these two officers with authority and a weapon is even more appalling.

Especially when Mayor Bud Clark, Chief Penny Harrington, former U.S. Attorney for Oregon Sidney Lezak and Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schrunck all testified to Hanlon that the actions of Montee and Wickersham were a serious offense.

Mr. Hanlon ignored the statements of these officials and the entire Black community. Instead, he insulted the Black community further when he returned two men to the Portland Police Bureau, who have proven they are unfit to serve the public. And in the process, inflamed an already volatile relationship between the police and the Black community.

Portland could find sister city in its own back yard

Northeast Portland residents could learn something from Portland's adoption of a new sister city — they might be able to solve some of the area's problems by starting a sister city movement of their own!

"Albina-Inner Northeast" fits the description of an underdeveloped Third World community that could benefit from the kind of attention and aid that came to Corinto, Nicaragua.

Unemployment approaches 50 percent, many women are so poor they turn to prostitution, schools are understaffed and underbudgeted, streets are in disrepair. Infant mortality is as high as some Third World countries, and illiteracy and the high school drop-out rate are climbing.

Welfare mothers wonder how they are going to feed their children and pay the bills as the breadwinner leaves the area to look for work. People are living in garages, in cars, under bridges. Some families live eight or more to a room.

Businesses owned by rich white people from outlying areas (Beaverton is a foreign country) milk the community for profits that are invested outside the community such as corporations milk the Third World. White businessmen come into the area to exploit the community in another way by engaging in sex for hire.

Drug pushers and pimps with criminal records take over the street corners and lie in wait for the elementary school children. Children turn to drugs and crime because they see wasted lives stretching out ahead of them, and because they feel they

have as much right as any American to the things they see on television.

Racist police respond to problems in the community with massive force — they choke and shoot first and ask questions later.

In short, residents of "Albina-Inner Northeast" live in the kind of crisis conditions that caused Corinto supporters to get on the bandwagon. Perhaps an "Albina-Inner Northeast" sister city committee could form and begin educating the wider community about the crisis. Children could gather school supplies, doctors and nurses could organize medical supplies and health care, there could be garage sales, dances and dinners for the new sister city.

Committees could be formed, articles written, and sister church, sister school and sister clinic ties could be established.

City officials and prominent citizens could visit the proposed sister city and view the conditions.

At the City Council, Mildred Schwab could screw up her face at the thought of a city program that helps the poor instead of the rich. Bud Clark could say he likes the idea but also that we need a new policy before he votes for it.

Like Corinto, "Albina-Inner Northeast" could become sister cities with towns in England, Holland and other countries. The new sister city might benefit, like Corinto did, with an education and job training program financed by a foreign government.

Letters to the Editor

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.

To the Editor,

The NAACP is dismayed and chagrined at the arbitrator's ruling in the case of the Portland police officers fired for violation of bureau rules and engaging in conduct unbecoming a professional police officer. It is an outrage that the decent citizens of Portland have no protection against a small group of ignorant, misguided, and sometimes evil individuals who, after pinning on the badge of public authority and swearing to uphold the law, abuse the public's trust. This kind of arrogance undermines the public's confidence in the criminal justice system.

For the arbitrator to find that the union contract between the city of Portland and the Police Bureau does not permit city officials to take warranted action against misbehaving police officer raises a serious question: who is in charge of the Portland Police Bureau, the chief, the assigned commissioner, the Mayor, or the head of the policeman's union? In every country, state, or city anywhere in the world in which the police are permitted to be a law unto themselves, the rights of ALL the citizens of that jurisdiction are jeopardized.

Portlanders ought to think about the kind of police force it has. Just a few weeks ago, the city auditor disclosed that illegal and unwarranted acts of Portland policemen have dearly cost the city. Most police offices are intelligent, decent human beings who work hard at enforcing the law and upholding the public trust vested in them. But it is apparent that over time they have become trapped in a system which protects those few individuals who run amuck. Portland's independent police bureau, which does not even show respect for its chief, no longer best serves the interest of the people of Portland. The Bureau must be brought under control. Public officials who are accountable to the general public must be able to manage the police bureau as they do other bureaus of the city. Some kind of process must be established to protect the reputations of intelligent, dedicated police officers, the good name of the city of Portland, and the rights of the law-abiding citizens.

We simply must recognize the fact that *no one is safe* when the local police are not accountable.

The NAACP invites all people of goodwill to join in an effort to bring a sense of decency, respect, and fairness to the practices of the Portland Police Bureau. Silence is the hallmark of the coward, the uninformed, or the unconcerned.

ORA L. NUNLEY
President, N.A.A.C.P.

To the Editor,

The Oregon Legislature accomplished two things during the last session: they passed a sales tax proposal and they granted themselves huge raises in pay and allowances. The voters took care of the sales tax in no uncertain terms. We now have the opportunity to take care of the unreasonable pay increases.

We can collect signatures on an initiative petition which would revoke the pay raises of the legislature. This petition also limits the length of the legislative session by placing a limit of 120 days on the number of days for which legislators may collect legislative session per diem for the regular legislative year, and 150 days for the biennium.

This shortened legislative session not only will cost less, but will open legislative services to more qualified Oregonians who now refuse to consider service in the legislature because of the time away from job or business. It will help Oregon return to a "citizen legislature" by eliminating some of the incentive to make legislative service a full-time profession.

Thirty-eight states now limit the length of legislative sessions. Oregon should be next. You can help by requesting an initiative petition from Oregonians in Action, 1533 E. Burnside, Portland, OR 97214 or calling 233-1231.

FRANK L. NIMS
President
Oregonians in Action

To the Editor,

Wickersham and Montee are cops out on the loose. These two men are armed, dangerous, and may be roaming our community again after Nov. 4th. Arbitrator Paul Hanlon and the Portland Police Union have given them the license, once again, to spread their poison of racism among the more susceptible of the Portland Police Force.

These two are the officers who sold T-shirts with the legend "Don't Choke 'Em, Smoke 'Em" with a drawing of

To the Editor,

Jerry Garner's article on Bobby Seale's debate with a Billy Bob yahoo Atrikkkaner deserves some further comment and clarification. Garner stated: "When a woman from the Revolutionary Communist Party questioned the sincerity of Seale's dedication to the cause of nationalism, Seale became angry and gave the woman a spirited lecture." I don't think this clearly captures the actual question posed to Seale. We stated that he was promoting the most dangerous and worst reformist illusion in saying the issue in South Africa was "one man - one vote" when the real issue on the agenda is a revolutionary national liberation struggle to totally eradicate the system of apartheid, raze it to the ground and build on its ashes a new and liberated Anzania (South Africa).

We simply asked Seale to defend his statement in light of what the right to vote has meant for Black people in this country. Seale's "spirited lecture" was more of the nature of a political fireman whose buckets have run dry.

Objectively, two roads are posing themselves in South Africa: The road of constitutional reform or the revolutionary road. Unfortunately, this second more realistic and urgently demanded road was attacked viciously by Seale. How remarkable to see a revolutionary struggle turned into a civil rights movement! Desiring a "replay of the 60s" is a retrograde trend — coming from a man who has learned to live on his knees and like it!

South Africa is a state whose fundamental basis is the exploitation and oppression of Black masses. More than a word — apartheid — is a barbaric system used to organize society in South Africa, under which an entire nation and the vast majority of people, the Anzaman people, are held prisoner by the white minority ruling class. In short, it is a naked system of brutal national oppression justified through a whole web of pseudo-theories of white supremacy and enforced by laws and guns. This last year has seen unparalleled struggle in a world situation a few drumbeats away from world war. The struggle is approaching a turning point with definite potential to catapult it to a whole new level. It is possible that a full-fledged and generalized armed conflict where the question of state power is immediately on hand — in short, a civil war — could break out. Promoting "one man - one vote" as the way forward is a deceptive notion of the greatest magnitude. The system has proved it is beyond reform. To preach winning equality and emancipation within

To the Editor,

The United States has actively supported racism and colonialism in southern Africa. The U.S. has violated the U.N. arms embargo as well as its own self-proclaimed support for human dignity and self-determination. Whatever the rationalizations which are offered by Mr. Stuart Pringle, U.S. support for South Africa racism and colonialism is obviously necessary to protect the investments of the same American corporate interests which also wield influence on U.S. domestic policy.

If American investment were redirected away from South Africa, the United States would not merely end its support of racism, but would also contribute significantly to the economic development and well-being of the rest of Africa. Instead, millions of private American dollars flow into the South African economy — already an affluent society for its ruling caucasoid minority — while millions of Black

a smoking revolver. This was done on the very day of the funeral of the Black citizen who had died as a result of a police applied sleeper hold. The rotten apples are back in the barrel and free once again to promote their sick and simplistic solution to handling Black suspects.

Black citizens need to be on the lookout for these men; they are armed, dangerous, and will be wearing blue uniforms.

MACCEO PETTIS

the system means telling people a lie that is contradicted by hundreds of years of history and by present day reality.

Perhaps Seale is to be a new "point" man for the elite strata among Blacks, whose service to imperialism demands they promote the line that Blacks have a stake in this system and must fight (and die) to get their fair share. In Seale's home town — Philly — the American dream for Black people has a price tag: an entire neighborhood razed while a Black mayor supervised the massacre of MOVE adults and children on Osage Avenue. Seale, by the way, has yet to denounce this!

Bobby's world-wide cynicism to those of us who haven't learned not to hate oppression and haven't capitulated — to "wake up and smell the coffee" and "come to grips with the real world" — would be laughable if they weren't so dangerous. Does he know how really old he's become? Bobby's solution of "community groups" going to South Africa to "reason" with Botha brings to mind a similar statement of his in 1970: "We need this community control of the police, because if we don't have community control of the police, we will not be able to curtail civil war in America." Whether in America or South Africa, revolution is not a costly alternative, but a welcome resolution to a bloodsucking system.

Bobby, your reform train has no tracks. It is not going anywhere because it has nowhere to go. No waters or preachers will ever topple the racist apartheid regime nor its U.S. Godfathers. Genuine revolutionary leadership is on the top of the list on the summons for the Anzaman people. And this is not just a nightmare of inflated and inflatable Black political firemen like Seale. They are nightmares of the U.S. rulers as a whole as they face the prospect that the fires of rebellion in the bantustans and townships of Anzania will inflame the "bantustans" and townships across America. The Anzaman people are not shedding their blood to replace the present regime with a new form of colonialism with a few Black faces pasted on top. We owe the Anzamanians much. They have taught us much and given us a feeling of strength in these difficult times. Our hands and hearts go out to them as we continue our mutual struggle. To the people of Anzania we say: GO FOR IT! AMANDA!

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Africans are threatened by starvation.

The challenge posed to the United States by South Africa is neither economic nor military. It is essentially a moral challenge: Is the United States prepared to continue sacrificing the legitimate human rights and aspirations of the 25 or so million Blacks living in South Africa and Namibia to the convenience and profit of American corporate interests? The South African government is an international pariah.

American support for the racist policies of South Africa is just one facet of a general foreign policy posture which is consistently insensitive to the rights and aspirations of independent Africa. Both diplomatically and economically, U.S. policy toward Africa has been characterized by neglect or by support for repressive minority regimes.

DR. JAMIL CHEROUEE

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