

Stop the war they don't want you to see.



"The contras are not part of the solution, but part of the problem." (President Arias, ABC News, 10/8/87).

Since the signing of the Arias Peace Plan in August of 1987, the contras in Nicaragua have killed at least 96 civilians, wounded 143, kidnapped 135.

In that time, the U.S. Congress has 3 times agreed to send more money to the contras, totaling more than \$21 million.

You can stop this war on February 3, the next contra aid vote. Call your Congressperson now, and tell them:

NO CONTRA AID NO COMPROMISE

Call them at (202) 224-3121.

East Portland: Ron Wyden West Portland and North Coast: Les Aucoin
Eugene: Peter DeFazio Corvallis and South Coast: Denny Smith
East, Central, and Southern Oregon: Bob Smith

Social Security Updating Benefits

In January, all Social Security Benefits and Supplemental Security Income increased by 4.2%. As this increase was not used to calculate the January food stamps effective January 31, 1988, all food stamp households receiving these benefits will have their benefits updated by matching them against the Social Security record. These SSB and SSI increases will reduce your February food stamp allotment. Beginning February 25, 1988, all ADC and Food Stamp households receiving Unemployment Compen-

sation from the Oregon Employment Division will have these benefits automatically updated each month. This will be done by matching your Social Security number against the Oregon Employment Division record. Clients will no longer have to report changes to the local AFS office.

By doing these updates, Adult and Family Services will try to see that each household is receiving the proper amount of benefits they are entitled to receive.

A Woman of Vision - Con't from Page 1

more glimpse into Black culture. If someone reads my work or the work of Toni Morrison or Alice Walker or Toni Cade, then they have twice as much knowledge than if they rely on one person. My role is to make sure there is more than one voice to be heard."

Looking out across time and space into the 21st century, Ms. McElroy said it is important for African-Americans to remember, "that we are everywhere in the world. Not just in any one place. And, there is nothing that says this is your place. My father used to say to me, 'your place is wherever you are'

and when I go into a small village in Africa and I see a Black man there and talk to him, I realize that we have the same basic heritage. We must make ourselves universal because the politics of this country would have us believe we only exist in one portion of the state or somewhere on a farm down south. We exist everywhere and we are doing everything, and speaking every kind of language there is. That's what we've got to tell the children. The future is how far you can take yourself. This is our planet, the whole human family, and no one has the right to say 'this is your place, you can only move into this part of town.' Our children have to know that everything is possible. There

is nothing that should be restricted."

Her eyes danced. Her lips smiled and I knew I had just experienced the magic of the Queen of the Ebony Isles. The magic lingered long after she had departed for the Portland Airport, and a few hours later after a frantic search, I found two of her books. Still overpowered by her vision and her warmth, I quickly opened "Winter Without Snow" and started to read on page 49. "One day, you stepped into my horoscope, bringing summer and a view of the mountains I had never known..."

That's the power and magic of Colleen McElroy: A woman of vision.

PORTLAND OBSERVER

"The Eyes and Ears of the Community" 288-0033

Black History Month
At Portland Community College
February 1-26, 1988

"The Constitutional Status of Afro-Americans into the 21st Century" 1088

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GANGS!

Gang activity has been on the increase since May '87. Experts say there are as many as 200 adult gang members in the metro area with ties to LA gangs. At least 300 juveniles are active in local gangs. Another major problem is the "wanna be's"; they're juveniles who emulate gangs. Police say that "wanna be's" are just as dangerous as organized gang members.

Some residents have been victims of gang violence. Others live in fear of attacks. How safe are our streets? Who "joins" gangs? Why? Have they penetrated our schools? How dangerous are gang members? Can gang activity be stopped? How can we protect ourselves? What do YOU think?

Join Jack Faust and his guests for a look at street gangs. This program will be taped on Thursday, February 4th from 8-9 PM. Guests should arrive at KATU (21st and NE Sandy Blvd.) at 7:15 PM. If you'd like to attend this discussion, please call Mary Fetsch, Frank Mungeam, Janice Richkoff or Lynn Felton at 231-4620 for seat reservations. This program will aid on Sunday, February 7th, from 6-7 PM on Channel 2. The public is welcome.

Once a big city problem, gangs now threaten our community. The big gangs from LA and NY have infiltrated Portland and other Oregon cities. The motivation? Money! They commit robberies and assaults, extort money from businesses and have taken over most of the drug houses. They recruit kids to traffic drugs, intimidate neighbors, use violence and fight with other gangs. The fear is that if we don't stop this invasion, the local recruitment of our kids, our gang problem will turn into another LA!

Mission Accomplished

by Nyewusi Askari

When the Ben Linder Construction Brigade recently returned from a mission trip to Nicaragua, PC Peri, an African American, was one of the first to step off the plane. For Mr. Peri, the trip fulfilled a desire to help carry on the memory and the work of Ben Linder, and to gain a first-hand account of the Nicaragua conflict with the United States.

Ben Linder is the Portlander who was killed in Nicaragua as he worked to construct a dam for the Nicaraguan people. Peri says Linder's death was the result of a Contra plot to discourage concerned Americans from giving aid to the Nicaraguans.

The specific purpose of the Ben Linder Brigade was to provide construction on a Nicaraguan hospital that was in need of serious repair. Peri says the Brigade was welcome with open arms. "The Nicaraguans were very open to our coming, and they understood the need for solidarity between countries internationally. So they understood our purpose for coming was not simply to do some repairs on the hospital but to extend solidarity between Americans and Nicaraguans and to carry communication back from the situation in Nicaragua to the people in the United States," Peri explained.

Peri said the trip gave him more of a balanced view of the conflict from within Nicaragua. "It's good for all Americans to get outside of the United States, at least once. It doesn't really matter where you go. The reason you need to get out of the country once is so you can go see something that is being talked about and see how it is being talked about here in the states. Then you can compare what had happened with how it's being talked about. It gives you an ability later on to get



Peri - impressed by the spirit of the Nicaraguans. Photo by Richard J. Brown

the news in the paper and see how to interpret it."

While in Nicaragua, Peri lived with a Nicaraguan family. "It was a good situation," Peri said. "The family was not a supporter of the Sandinista government, so I wasn't listening to a party line. They were not Contra. They were in exactly the same situation that many of us face here in the United States of being frustrated and confused with the state of economic affairs and not knowing what to do about it. They could point out inequities but no solutions. So I got a good sense of the frustration, and it led me to understand the many perspectives of what it's like to be in Nicaragua in the middle of a war."

Peri was impressed by the spirit of the Nicaraguans. "The Nicaraguans were very relaxed. Life goes on. But it's punctuated by funerals and crosses on the side of the roads and other sites where people have been shot. It's punctuated by the long lines for gasoline that go on for blocks. It's punctuated by the lights

going off in the middle of a shower or the lights going off at the beginning of surgery. These kinds of incidents show up in too regular of a manner to be part of a normal way of running a country."

Peri noted that the war is being fought by Nicaraguan children, by old men in the Militia, and by young men in the regular army. He said that the Contras' method of conducting the war is not to go out and find the Sandinistas' soldiers. "Their method is to attack and rape and, in any manner, discourage the existence of further economic assistance to the cities, and then retreat as fast as they can."

"When you look on the faces of the Nicaraguan children, they are not sad, they are not destitute; they are bright-eyed, and they have a lot of hope in their eyes. If we saw that much hope on the faces of the children in the Bronx, in Queens, and in Portland, we'd have something to keep us hopeful," Peri concluded.

Look for our African American Special February 10, 1988

Perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

Economics: Rise and Fall of the Albina Corporation

Last week I described my participation in a successful Los Angeles company that had a 90% minority work force. Here we have a brief review of the fortunes of Portland's 'The Albina Corporation' which, for a while (1968-1971), was the largest minority-owned (?) and operated manufacturing company in America.

Using this enterprise as a model in the business class I taught at Portland State University, I cited it as the creation of a white San Francisco attorney, Frank Kelso, who projected the concept of a nationwide chain of ghetto factories to be jointly owned by an 'employee stock trust' (Black) and the public sector ("The Kelso Two-Factor Theory").

The idea was to simultaneously achieve a number of objectives designed to place Blacks in the mainstream of the nation's economy: train the 'disadvantaged' in the skills and crafts needed to produce goods; reduce the rolls of welfare and other public assistance; introduce Blacks to the concepts of corporate management (promote Albina residents from the work force); assure community involvement by appointing the board of directors from the community.

A composite (helter-skelter) financing was employed to start this company: several quarter-million dollar grants from government and private sectors, including a church group, Small Business Administration loans, and huge 'advances' from the Defense Department customers in anticipation of products not yet manufactured. In addition, scores of machines were loaned or donated by the U.S. General Services Administration. Initial employees' salaries were paid by the U.S. Department of Labor through training contracts - not out of 'earned income'. An 'income

tax deferral plan' was put in place by a special act of Congress and an agreement with the Internal Revenue Service.

The Albina Corporation got off to a gala, well-publicized start with the executive suite filled by a Black Portland attorney as president, and two Black engineers as vice president and treasurer, respectively, from the Space Program and from the Atomic Energy Commission. Also, there were any number of whites on loan from industry as advisors. With perhaps two exceptions, there was no point-to-point correspondence between experience and the tasks to be performed.

Over a three-year period the product line ranged from tent frames for the Army and fiberglass boats for the Coast Guard, to ammunition boxes for the Army's Frankfurt Arsenal. Also, there were some motions toward obtaining private sector contracts to utilize the equipment when idle.

Now, I ask, you, what could go wrong - other than using up most of the loans and advances in a learning phase, almost before the first product was made? For one thing, if you refer to last week's article about the Globeware Corp., you will see that they matched limited skills with limited ambitions. The result was only a 5% rejection rate (on simple pots and pans), and that after only a six-week training cycle. The Albina Corporation, steeped in social rhetoric and altruism - and a labor force of whom 90% had never worked with a machine nor seen a time clock - tried to produce an ammunition box to a 1/10,000 of an inch tolerance. The result, of course, was disastrous, with an initial 90% rejection rate, while the overhead and debt mounted daily.

I became part of this scenario in 1971 when I was called in as chief accountant to perform an audit for the U.S. General Accounting Office, and to expedite the termination of the whole ill-fated affair. My first introduction to the euphemistic "poverty programs" was mind-boggling. My audit and recapitulation of the millions of dollars that had passed through the company revealed that contrary to popular opinion, there was no evidence of "widespread theft and embezzlement". Rather, everything that those of us experienced in industry and spent half-a-lifetime in learning had simply been thrown out the window in an emotional social binge. Unbelievably, the inexperienced community board of directors had not been given the most basic advice or training for their role, and could not possibly have influenced the fate of the corporation.

What worries me today, almost twenty years later, is that many contemporary Black economic programs would seem to incorporate the same weak elements when it comes to the background and relevant experience of the key players. I wondered then - and I wonder now - why those with a track record are not called in at the inception and planning stage, rather than after the fact?

Is there an egocentric messiah complex in the Black 'promoters of the Dream' which causes them to reject any realistic input into their projects? During the height of the poverty program era, would it not have made sense to draw on the many successful Black businessmen of the South for 'on-loan' executives to design and operate the Minority Business Programs? Have community of governmental attitudes changed any today?