

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## The King Neighborhood Association: An Exercise in Futility

In October, 1988, the King Neighborhood Association Board of Directors received for review a discussion draft of a plan to revitalize the King neighborhood. The plan was prepared by Jankans-Arnold, Urban planner of Portland, Oregon, at the request of the King Board.

The plan identified unemployment, drugs, crime, and abandoned housing as key issues to be addressed (and with all deliberate speed) if the King neighborhood was to be rescued from its hostile environment.

Although the plan lacked substance, it served one essential purpose; it brought forth to the King board input from King residents and businesses based on actual interviews, who expressed their views on what they would like to see happen in their community. Unfortunately, this information was inadvertently omitted from the plan for had it been included, perhaps it would have impacted the King board more favorably.

After careful review, the King board voted unanimously to approve their plan, and by law, submitted it to the King neighborhood residents in a general meeting for approval or rejection.

According to the by-laws of the King neighborhood association, nine members of the association attending a general or special called meeting constitutes a quorum. This includes general membership or board members. Minutes of the association dated February 28, 1989, reflects a total of twenty nine votes cast by members of the association who left the facility under the impression they had approved a plan which would restore vision for a community which for so long had been "looking thru a

glass darker". Thus, the King neighborhood re-vitalization plan as approved was in compliance with the King association by-laws and should have been implemented with all deliberate speed.

But as commonly happens in neighborhood associations, politics came into play once again. The city council, after earlier approval rejected the King plan and voted to consider other options as requested by the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, of which the King association is a member. The decision to contest the King plan was made by the Coalition board in a general meeting, and strangely enough, the King association representative who voted for the plan at the February 28 meeting voted against the plan at the Northeast coalition meeting. This double dealing served no useful purpose other than to divide the board, cast suspicions throughout the association and add to an already declining membership.

Compounding the associations problems is the absence of leadership on the board. The chairperson of the King board for reasons unknown has failed to attend recent meetings and no board member has stepped forward to fill the void. As a result, the plan to re-vitalize the King neighborhood, while not yet dead, is most certainly in limbo.

Some King board members, contacted recently by the Observer, state they were thoroughly confused and somewhat disgusted at the cheap politics and total lack of ongoing disregard for the King neighborhood. Some have indicated they plan to tender their resignations when their term expires in October.

Hopefully the city council will re-evaluate it's priorities and fulfill it's promises before this happens.

## Troops, Drugs, and Gangs!

The decision by Governor Neil Goldschmidt to call in the National Guard to provide support for the Portland Police Department in combating drugs and gangs in N/NE Portland was a wise one and well received by community residents and businesses. In offering the guard, the governor made it emphatically clear that the role of the guard would not involve police action but logistical and administrative support. In this regard, the National Guard performed admirably and should be commended for a job well done.

According to police sources, it is much too early to assess what impact their presence has had on the flow of illegal drugs into N/NE Portland. However, street sources claim hard drugs are as plentiful as ever, just more expensive and cheaper quality. They also state that marijuana is definitely scarce. Credit here must be given to improved detection methods by Federal and

State law enforcement agencies and special recognition to Portland Police for effective drug enforcement.

Special recognition to the governor also for not turning the guard loose in the streets of this community as called for by certain factions including the Mayor. Although his office issued a statement claiming he was misquoted, his headlines sent tremors through the Portland community.

The National Guard are commonly referred to as "Weekend Warriors" called into action to quell civil disturbances or patrol local disaster areas to protect life and property. Since the police department had identified less than five hundred gang members in N/NE Portland, that hardly constitutes a state of emergency, requiring the presence of heavy artillery or tanks.

Thanks Neil!

## Along the Color Line

### "Freedom for Namibia"

Dr. Manning Marble

In only two months, an election will be held in Namibia which could decide the future of the entire liberation struggle throughout southern Africa. An international agreement sponsored by the United Nations has created the possibility for democracy and majority rule for this south-west African state, which has been controlled by white South Africa for decades. But the promise of democratic government is being threatened by several factors, which may yet produce the tyranny of white supremacy throughout the region.

South Africa accepted this international election in Namibia due largely to events which began back in 1976. Apartheid troops were defeated militarily by the Angolans and Cubans in Angola's liberation war. South Africa suffered serious strategic losses also with the independence of Mozambique; and within another four years, Zimbabwe would be liberated as well. Consequently, the South Africans fell back into Namibia as their last line of defense. The South African air force constructed a series of bases along the northern frontier of Namibia, and conducted bombing raids against SWAPO camps in Angola. In 1978, the apartheid military escalated these attacks, and in one instance the South Africa airforce murdered over 600 civilians in one bombing raid.

It was in response to the apartheid assault that the United Nations called for a peace plan in 1978, which included an immediate cease fire; the removal of all but 1500 apartheid troops after two months; and the scheduling of elections for a new constituent assembly based on universal suffrage. Under the Carter administration, South Africa was being pressured to accept these terms; but after the U.S. elections of 1980, the Reagan administration informed the apartheid regime that they were under no pressure to accept the UN's agreement immediately. The U.S. used its diplomatic weight to permit South Africa to consolidate itself inside Namibia, by establishing paramilitary forces among the white settler population, and by recruiting blacks who accepted a puppet/client role in opposition to SWAPO.

The South Africans were only forced to come to terms in 1988, when they were defeated militarily at the battle of Cujito Cuanavale. It had become clear to them that Namibia could no longer be held as a direct colony of apartheid. But the Reagan administration had given the South Africans eight important years in which to consolidate its clients inside Namibia. They were able to recruit spies and agents to infiltrate SWAPO; and they had identified local Blacks who were agreeable to oppose SWAPO in the upcoming constituent elections.

Although the international agreement declares that the people of Namibia must exercise self-determination, South Africa has a strategy to undermine this process. According to a provision in the agreement, any white South Africans who were born in Namibia or who can prove at least four years' residency will be permitted to vote in the Namibian election, even if they no longer live in the country. The apartheid regime has registered perhaps as many as 150,000 whites in an effort to throw the election from the Black majority. Most political observers had assumed that the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), which has been the leading progressive political force in the struggle against apartheid domination of the country, would easily win more than two thirds electoral support it requires to control the new constituent assembly. But a combination of errors and mistakes on the part of SWAPO, plus the maneuvering of the apartheid regime and its local allies, now have created a giant question mark for Namibia's future.

SWAPO's first error occurred in April, immediately preceding the initiation of the UN peace settlement process. SWAPO ordered its northern Namibia perhaps as many as 1200 fighters of its People's Liberation Army of Namibia. The purpose was to consolidate its position in the region. South African military and its local paramilitary clients reacted, killing 300 fighters, and terrorizing the local population. This permitted the South Africans to delay the process of demilitarization until mid-August. During this interim period, the military and paramilitary units were able to intimidate thousands of potential voters. African voters were told to stay away from political meetings sponsored by SWAPO, and not to register for the elections. In the northern part of the country, where the greatest fighting occurred this year, registration figures are low—precisely in the electoral areas in which SWAPO had counted on to produce its necessary 66 percent mandate.

SWAPO'S second political error was the product of South Africa's successful attempts to infiltrate the organization over a period of several years. Under the terms of the independence process, both the apartheid regime and SWAPO were obligated to release their detainees. Hundreds of SWAPO prisoners were indeed agents of apartheid. But unfortunately, many others were not. A group of prisoners had been veterans of the anti-apartheid struggle and members of SWAPO who had been unjustly arrested due to the fear that they had been agents. A few prisoners, such as SWAPO former central committee member Victor Nkanddi, had also been prisoners previously in South African detention camps. SWAPO officials now admit that many mistakes were made in the treatment of prisoners, and that many mistakes were made in the treatment of prisoners, and that those individuals who have acted against party procedures will be held accountable and prosecuted. However, the entire incident has created the sense among many supporters of SWAPO that the organization has lost a good amount of political credibility.

A third mistake is that of political inconsistency. SWAPO for many years maintained an unambiguous political line, calling for a fundamental, radical economic reorganization of the nation, and a sharp break from all commercial ties with apartheid. But SWAPO has modified its economic program in an attempt to win over non-SWAPO constituencies. This effort has confused their core defenders.

If SWAPO fails to win a two-thirds vote, the liberation struggle may be stalled for another decade or more. But the forces of white supremacy are taking no chances. On 12 September, for example, one of the senior white officials of SWAPO, Anton Lubowski, an attorney and former member of the South African army who defected to the Africans, was murdered in front of his home in Windhoek. Lubowski would have become a key leader of a SWAPO-led government. When pushed to the limit, apartheid and its clients in Namibia respond with terror, harassment and death. These are the essential tools of racism.

South Africa cannot achieve freedom unless Namibia also becomes free. We must pressure the Bush administration to step up tougher sanctions against South Africa. We should also contact Congressmen Howard Wolpe (D) and Dan Burton (R), the chair and ranking Republican members, respectively, of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, to demand the end of South Africa's murderous maneuvers to subvert majority rule and democracy in Namibia.

## Vantage Point

### Racism is Alive and Well in America



by Ron Daniels

Over the past decade it has become fashionable to discuss the "declining significance of race" in terms of the growth and development, or lack of it, as it relates to African-Americans. Under the influence of leading social analyst like William Julius Wilson, and the rising sector of conservative Black Republicans like Walter Williams, and Thomas Sowell the idea that racism is no longer a severe impediment to African-American racial progress has come into vogue. Wilson argues that racism while still a factor as it relates to Black progress is secondary to economic factors. The Black conservatives seem to suggest that Black progress is tied to economics and the need for more energetic effort by African-Americans themselves.

While there is more than a kernel of truth in both these viewpoints, the cold reality is that racism is alive and well in America. Unfortunately the growth and relative prosperity of the Black upper and middle class has tended to mask the reality of continued racist oppression, and racial barriers at all levels. This "illusion of progress" has had the effect of lulling Black people to sleep on the question of racism. Indeed the pain of racism is such that our desire to ignore it in order to live a normal life almost constitutes a kind of wishful thinking.

The escalating incidence of racist violence, slurs, insults, and the stagnation of African-American progress in relation to white America is now forcefully compelling us to face the fact that no matter how well off, how well educated, how poor or rich we may be African-Americans are still seen as niggers in America by a frightfully large number of white Americans.

Bensonhurst and Virginia Beach are simply two of the more highly publicized instances of racism rearing its ugly head to haunt and harm African-Americans. In the case of

Bensonhurst the result was fatal. In Virginia Beach though there were no fatalities it was clear that a community had decided that Black students, for all of the \$green power\$ they were destined to expend, were unwanted and unwelcome. The fact is that the more publicized incidents of racist attacks and intolerance like Bensonhurst, Virginia Beach, and Howard Beach are but the tip of the iceberg. All across America it is as if a floodgate of suppressed and repressed racial antagonisms and feelings has burst loose.

A couple of months ago I participated in a march in Fairfield, South Carolina protesting an incident of police violence which resulted in the death of a young Black man. In recent conversations with friends from that state they report an alarming growth in all kinds of incidents of racial harassment and racist violence. South Carolina is not isolated in this regard. Reports (unpublished) of racial violence and harassment have become commonplace. From small towns to major urban centers, from the rural south to the sprawling metropolises of the west, racism is openly resurfacing as a disturbing and unavoidable fact of life for African-Americans.

Being affluent, rich or powerful may reduce racism to a simple nuisance for some African-Americans. But as several prominent African-Americans written on both A.B.C.'s "Black in white America" and on N.B.C.'s R.A.C.E., their prominence does not exempt them from being viewed and treated like "niggers". In fact the only thing that saved Mr. or Ms. prominent African-American from a fatal beating in Howard Beach or a bullet in Bensonhurst was not their prominence, but their absence.

Beyond the mere "nuisance" factor there is mounting evidence that the gap between Black and white, even between rich Blacks and rich whites is unavoidably attributable to racism. Economic factors are admittedly crucial, but the deep seated, firmly entrenched fact of racism and cultural aggression remain persistent factors which we as African-Americans dare not ignore as we build an agenda for our future, and map strategies for our liberation. Illusions, wishful thinking, or faulty analysis will not erase the fact that racism is alive and well in America!

## Letter to the Editor

It was a pleasure to read in your September 14 issue the article by Mr. Samuel Dubois Cook on his recent trip to Israel. Mr. Cook's report seemed balanced and very caring. We certainly join with him in his prayers for an end to the violence, for everyone's sake.

Another aspect of Israeli society which may be of interest to your readers was the dramatic rescue, in a daring and covert operation, of 14,000

black Ethiopian Jews in 1983-1985. These people preserve a form of Judaism dating back 3,000 years, they will form an elite group in that society.

I enjoy reading your paper regularly.

Sincerely,  
Charles R. Schiffman  
Executive Director,  
Jewish Federation of Portland

OREGON LOTTERY

## Get in on the Action...



Play Oregon Lottery's new Sports Action Game. Its exciting, its fun! Details at your Lottery Retailer. Enter this week to play and win!

Turn to page 3 for Official Program information on this week's Sports Action Game!

Sports Action is not associated with, sponsored by, or authorized by the National Football League.

**PORTLAND OBSERVER**  
OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN-AMERICAN PUBLICATION  
Established in 1970

Alfred L. Henderson/Publisher      Leon Harris/General Manager

Gary Ann Garnett  
Business Manager      Joyce Washington  
Sales/Marketing Director

PORTLAND OBSERVER is published weekly by Exie Publishing Company, Inc. 525 N.E. Killingsworth St. Portland, Oregon 97211 P.O. Box 3137 Portland, Oregon 97208

(503) 288-0033 (Office)  
Deadlines for all submitted materials:  
Articles: Monday, 5 p.m.; Ads: Tuesday, 5 p.m.

The PORTLAND OBSERVER welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope. All created designs display ads become the sole property of this newspaper and can not be used in other publications or personal usage, without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. 1989 PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

Subscriptions: \$20.00 per year in the Tri-County area.

The PORTLAND OBSERVER - Oregon's oldest African-American Publication - is a member of The National Newspaper Association - Founded in 1885. The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York.

CALL

PORTLAND OBSERVER

FAX #

503)288-0015

Support Our Advertisers!  
Say You Saw It In The  
**PortlandObserver!**