



WE SEE THE WORLD THROUGH BLACK EYES.



EDITORIAL FOCUS

Portland schools fail Black students

Almost ten years ago the Portland School District began its "Model School" program of compensatory education. The Black community had called for desegregation, but the School Board found a way out -- blaming the lack of achievement in the majority Black schools on social class.

The Model Schools project involved the use of federal funds to bring the resources of the Albina schools more in line with those of the remainder of the district. Books and audio visual materials and field trips were provided. Class size was reduced through the busing out of a few children. Teachers were paid an extra \$1,000 per year "combat pay" on the theory that this would make the better teachers want to teach in the Model Schools.

Yet, nearly ten years later, the Model Schools remain at the bottom of the achievement level. In fact, in the last five years the schools have deteriorated as compared to the district averages.

It used to be said that Black children did not learn because they were Black. Now it is because of social class. All the schools are classified according to socio-economic data and the children's achievement measured against that data. Those Black schools in the lower end of the socio-economic school are considered to have low achievement because of inadequacies in the home or community. No explanation is made why Black schools in poor areas -- Boise and King -- do less well than white schools in poor areas -- Buchman and Brooklyn.

We believe the community and the parents have been blamed too long for the inadequacies of the public school system. Research has demonstrated that the teacher is the prime factor. When the teacher believes the child can learn, he will learn. When the teacher has low expectations of the child and little respect for his family and neighborhood, he will not learn. Another important factor is expectation. Research has also shown that Black students and their families have higher expectations from education and higher goals than do their white counterparts.

Yet something happens in the schools. The starry-eyed first grader, who comes to school to learn to read, is destroyed by the time he reaches the fourth or fifth grade. Test scores show a steady decline in relative achievement as the child grows older. We don't believe the deciding factor is the community, or even the home, for every parent, no matter how poor or deprived, wants an education for his child. Principal McRae of Boise Elementary said the Boise parents are more cooperative than in any school where he has been assigned -- yet he thinks the parents must be blamed for the schools lack of achievement.

The time has come for the Portland Public Schools to get down to the business of educating Black children.

Black leaders: The silent majority

The NAACP, the Urban League, the Oregon Black Caucus and the Albina Ministerial Alliance are strangely quiet in a time of crisis in our community. People are suffering and yet these organizations -- designed to serve -- carry on with their monthly meetings and social gatherings as if they were operating in a vacuum.

Injustices are occurring in the community -- our children are being destroyed, prostitutes walk the streets, and police brutality is increasing. The Portland Development Commission is intimidating the homeowners it is supposed to assist. Discrimination in employment aggravates the problems created by high unemployment and rising prices. Insurance companies overcharge or refuse to insure Albina homes and businesses.

All of this is going on around us and still we hear nothing from our "leaders" and their organizations.

Where are the people to turn for help? The only two minority organizations that seem to be making an effort to help are the Albina Contractors Association and the United Minority Workers; yet neither of those organizations has been offered assistance by the so-called civil rights groups. When Clarence Harper was allegedly beaten by the police, it was a small white church that provided him financial assistance and moral support. Where were the Black ministers? When Blacks find they are in need of legal assistance, they must turn to the American Civil Liberties Union -- yet the NAACP has the longest and most successful record in civil rights law.

Where were these organizations when the Home Town Plan was being written or the redevelopment of Union Avenue planned. Where were they when Albina was divided among four political districts? Will they stand by and allow the schools of Albina to be closed? Do they no longer believe that they should be involved in every decision that effects the Black people of Oregon?

Are these organizations so involved in maintaining their prestige that they have forgotten their purpose? Are their leaders out of touch with the community?

Are they so intimidated by differences of opinion that they have withdrawn from the battle? Or do they think the fight for freedom has been won?

Nation neglects Vets

We have just celebrated two Veteran's Days -- one for the nation and another for the state. In the confusion about when to celebrate and who had what day off, we seem to have forgotten the veterans these days were meant to honor.

We have honored our Vietnam veterans with unemployment, inadequate health care, discrimination and poverty. The Prisoners of War were welcomed home as heroes, but the remainder of the veterans came home quietly and without fanfare. The veterans, including the sick and wounded, were hardly noticed as they slipped onto the welfare rolls and into food stamp lines. They were stigmatized as dope addicts and as unfortunate participants in an unpopular war -- better forgotten. There was no heroic homecoming like that enjoyed by the veterans of other wars.

This attitude pervades American society and the veterans remain the unseen men. Government assistance to them has been skimpy, medical care inadequate, counseling almost non-existent. They are unable to find jobs, the government subsidy for students is unrealistic.

All of these factors are multiplied when applied to the minority veteran. He is less apt to have had training prior to his entering the service; he is discriminated against by employers and unions; he is less likely to know how to manipulate agencies to obtain what few benefits there are for him. It is no wonder that these young men wonder what they fought for in Vietnam and what "democracy" means to them.

The people of the United States need to stop blaming the veterans of this illegal and immoral war and put the blame where it really belongs -- on the President and on Congress. They need to demand that the government immediately provide for the Vietnam veterans in the way it has provided for its veterans in the past and work to remove the aura of outcast that it has put upon its Vietnam veterans.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Best Wishes

Dear Mr. Henderson:

Thank you for your fine coverage of my promotion to Social Planner in the Human Resources Bureau and, in addition, for the wonderful job the *Portland Observer* is doing in assisting individuals in obtaining employment, not only the city structure and its agencies, but in all facets of employment.

I am deeply grateful and fully realize that, in a broad way, I and others would not be where we are if the *Port-*

land Observer were not there. You and your staff deserve to be congratulated for the three years of hard work it has taken to keep not only the Albina area informed on current and sometimes unpopular issues and subjects, but the general public as well.

Again, may I thank you and wish the *Observer* a long life. It is a much needed additional service to people.

Sincerely yours,
Faye LyDay
Social Planner

Regional government can include Blacks

Blacks in central cities can make regional councils and regional governments work for them by getting in on the ground floor as new organizations form and by pressing already-established structures to deal with issues important to the Black community, says a study published by the Joint Center for Political Studies.

Such steps, it says, can minimize the danger that some forms of regional government could dilute the emerging power of Blacks concerned in central cities, by putting power to make some decisions in the hands of suburban-dominated agencies.

Jeanne Fox, the Joint Center research associate who wrote the report, cites Durham, North Carolina as an example of a city in which Blacks are pressing for a regional arrangement that will satisfy their needs. Blacks on a commission that is currently preparing a charter for consolidation between the city of Durham, which is more than one-third Black, and the largely-white Durham County have refused to endorse the proposed merger unless a strong anti-discrimination section is included in the charter.

The booklet, titled **Regionalism and Minority Participation**, explains the background of regionalism; explains the various forms it has taken; examines in depth the example of Durham, and offers suggestions for leaders of Black and other minority communities who must deal with regionalism.

Among the suggestions are:

1. Help formulate the changes.
2. Look at benefits and losses... In an attempt to convince a community of the merits of reorganization, advocates of change often say what they think the public wants to hear... Instead of being distracted by the rhetoric, minority communities should try to assess what benefits or losses will accrue.
3. Make a list of community problems that a regional structure should deal with, and try to apply pressure so that it will deal with them. Regional bodies should encourage suburban areas to share problems, such as the need for low-cost housing.
4. Be aware that some types of regional organizations offer greater possibilities for minority representation than others.
5. Form coalitions with other groups with similar goals, even though their motives may be different. Thus, a pro-regionalism effort could find allies from downtown businessmen, or an anti-regionalism stance could be supported by some suburban interests.

The Joint Center for Political Studies, which published the report, is a private, non-profit and non-partisan organization which provides research, education, technical assistance and information for the nation's minority elected officials. Sponsored by Howard University and

the Metropolitan Applied Research Center, it is funded by foundations, other organizations, and tax exempt private gifts.

"BLACKS' RETICENCE TO SEIZE THE INITIATIVE TO ORGANIZE THEIR COMMUNITIES" SAID DOUGLAS G. GLASGOW, DEAN OF HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, IS A MAJOR FACTOR AND AN IMPORTANT FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO OUR COMMUNITIES' UNDEVELOPED STATUS"

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- DOCTORS
- LAWYERS
- ARTISTS
- TEACHERS
- MINISTERS
- WORKERS
- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
- SOCIAL WORKERS
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