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Editor/Publisher



**WE SEE THE WORLD
THROUGH BLACK EYES**

Multnomah county needs new system

Multnomah County last estimated its Black work force at about 7 percent. The County is unable to give an exact figure and the estimate is the result of an informal head count. The truth of the matter is that the County does not even know how many employees it has, much less how many Blacks.

This dilemma -- and also the lack of accurate personnel records -- is the result of an antiquated civil service system. It is not the fault of the employees, who get along the best they can, but of the system they attempt to operate.

In the age of affirmative action this is not acceptable, for how can a system that was designed to keep minorities out be used to get them in?

Ordinance #10, Article VII, Section 1.111 (1) says the qualifications for taking the examination to apply for county employment are: a) Read and write the English language; b) Possess fitness as defined by the Commission; c) Possess such habits as defined by the Commission; d) Be of such moral character as defined by the Commission.

What is meant by "fitness," "such habits" and "such moral character"? The County Civil Service Commission has defined them as "An applicant must be in ordinary good health and physical fitness, of good moral character, and of temperment and industrious habits."

If applied these rules could screen out, even prior to the examination, those who do not speak, read and write English, and persons who are physically handicapped, regardless of whether the person was capable of performing the job. How does the Commission judge "temperment and industrious habits" and "good moral character"? Traditionally these are the words that have been used to eliminate Blacks and other "undesirables". None of these criteria could possibly meet federal regulations.

There is also the problem of the civil service lists. After the examination is given, lists are made and hiring must be done from the lists until the examination is given again. This might be a year or two, but no one can get on the lists until the time expires. Those still on the list might no longer be interested. Sometimes there is no one on the list, but still the exam is not given.

What this means is that the young Black college graduate who wants to be a Juvenile Court Counselor goes to the Civil Service office and finds that he cannot take the examination for another year, and so cannot be employed. The young white graduate, however, has a friend who is a court counselor and knows there is a vacancy. He goes to the court and is given a temporary position. His problems are not over, however, because he receives no employment benefits while a temporary employee and he must look forward to taking the examination and maybe competing with others for "his" job a year or two later.

This is one of the reasons that County employment consists of a high percentage of friends and relatives. And it is one of the reasons why people who do not have friends and relatives in a position to hear about vacancies do not get hired by the County.

The County must put its house in order. We believe the proper way to do this would be to create a professional personnel department with the total responsibility for employment. The Civil Service Commission, expanded beyond the present three members, could serve in an advisory capacity and function as a complaint review board. Thus the employment criteria, defining of positions, selection and standardizing of tests, certification of applicants, keeping of personnel records -- all could be done by a professional staff that is enlightened to the latest personnel practices and laws. This department would be directly under the Board of County Commissioners so that responsibility could be placed on the personnel department and the Board by the voters. The present Civil Service Commission is appointed by the Board, but is responsible to no one.

Multnomah County must take immediate steps to make affirmative action and minority hiring a reality. Some of the Commissioners have shown considerable concern in this area, but they too are hampered by an unworkable system.

No more excuses

The latest pronouncement from Judge Sirica's court is that the 18 1/2 minutes missing on the Nixon tape was purposefully erased several times. The White House first blamed President Nixon's secretary, then a "mysterious force". Now it turns out that the mysterious force was a finger on the recording button -- which is what many of us supposed all along.

Whether the finger belonged to Nixon, Haldeman, or some other loyal supporter, we might never know, but we do know why President Nixon fought so long to withhold the tapes from the court. No doubt some public servant will step forward and take the blame -- but can the blame really be taken from President Nixon, who had the tapes in his personal care for several months?

We wonder how much criminal activity the American people will allow in the highest office. Is this man to be excused no matter what he does? Is he really above the law and the requirements of common decency? Is he to be allowed to subvert and use for his own personal gain the system that elected him and the Constitution he swore to uphold?

It appears that the American people have given up their "unalienable rights" to one man -- Richard Nixon.

Save children, not daylight

Daylight savings time might be a psychological boost to the American people -- allowing them to share in the sacrifice necessary to save energy. We doubt that much energy is saved -- but the emotional satisfaction gained might overshadow the hardships involved.

But as usual the hardships are born by those least able to bear them. Who will suffer for the rising fuel costs? Not the oil companies with their rising profits, nor those individuals with money to pay any price and to purchase extra ration coupons at will. Those who will suffer are those who must choose between food, clothing and fuel.

The immediate suffering caused by the extended daylight savings time is born by the children. Across the state small children are forced to walk to school in the dark or to wait for buses beside dark roads. The darkness is compounded by rain and snow. Already one small boy was killed in another part of the nation as he waited for his school bus. Must we wait for a tragedy like this to occur in Oregon before action is taken?

Since daylight savings time is now the law of the land, some local adjustments should be made. Although it might cause inconvenience to adults -- teachers, bus drivers, parents, etc. -- a later school opening time would be in the best interests of the children. A temporary change in opening time is the least that can be done for the protection of our children.

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

A grass roots meeting was held on January 5, 1974 in Klamath Falls, Oregon and the results were the following of the Energy Action Committee: The committee belief is that a number of immediate steps are essential:

1. A complete investigation of all existing and anticipated crude reserves.
2. A halt to exportations of crude oil and products.
3. Exact figures on allocations to be received.
4. Technological research into alternative energy sources, to include a patent search and release of all devices designed to save fuel.

We believe the existing shortage is contrived and that the solutions are available, but only if a demand for action is sounded by citizens.

Our own State Senator, Mr. Heard, was a member on a State Committee to investigate the oil companies and the oil interests in essence said, "Go peddle your papers."

We need your support. Please write: Energy Action Committee at 2040 Huron Street, Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601. We must have this information by February 1, 1974.

Energy Action Committee
Joe Victor, President



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YOU MUST BECOME INVOLVED IN THE WELFARE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY.

Girding for the New Year

by Vernon Jordan

I have yet to hear or read a single estimate of what's ahead in 1974 that encourages one to think that the coming year will be any smoother for the country and its citizens. Instead the outlook, for Black people especially, is grim.

Peering into the murky months ahead we can see political uncertainty, economic hardship, and continued national self-doubt.

Instead of the optimism and self-assured stance traditional at the start of a new year, the country seems lost in indecision and confusion. A recent Newsweek article

Housing seminar

(Continued from pg. 1, col. 3)

Other meetings will take up HUD's relationship with state and local civil rights enforcement agencies; affirmative fair housing marketing; minority business enterprise; exclusionary land use controls; fair share in community development programs; employment discrimination; corporate responsibility for equal housing; job training and business opportunities for HUD's project area residents and businesses; and women, their equality and goals in employment in federal, state and local governments.

Dr. Toote said that the comprehensiveness of the seminar reflects the broad area of responsibilities of HUD's Office of Equal Opportunity.

"Every fact of responsibility," said Dr. Toote, "will be discussed, studied, and reviewed, including the upward mobility for women in government."

Seminar discussions will highlight the role of equal opportunity in the new areas of proposed legislation now before the Congress -- The Better Communities Act, the new Housing Program, Responsive Governments' Act and the Direct Cash Assistance Program.

The Assistant Secretary noted that in connection with all of the proposed legislation, HUD Secretary James T. Lynn has assigned to her Office of Equal Opportunity an expanded list of duties and responsibilities.

"We do not take this challenge lightly, for there is much to be done to erase the effects of past discrimination while fulfilling new responsibilities envisaged in the proposed legislation," said Toote. A special Saturday session will be held to inform the practicing attorney about a new field of civil litigation -- fair housing discrimination cases.

based on a Louis Harris Poll for a Senate subcommittee found that a majority of citizens feel "America is in deep trouble". Just about every major institution lost the public's confidence compared to polls in previous years. Nearly two-thirds believe that their own ideas don't count anymore; a majority feel that the "people running the country don't really care what happens" to them; and three out of four agree that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

This dramatically negative view of the nation held by its own citizens is almost unprecedented and might increase in the coming year if the prime problems before the country are not solved.

The one on everyone's mind is the continued political uncertainty. The question regarding the White House is "Will he or won't he -- resign?" Resolution of the Watergate mess and related questions, including a final disposition of the uncertainties surrounding the executive branch, are a necessity for Black people.

The basic problems facing cities, poor people and Black people will need firm leadership and public confidence in the government. So long as they are missing, we will continue to be at a disadvantage. So 1974 had better see an end to the continual flow of rumors and a federal demonstration of taking the initiative, shaping events, and effective leadership.

This is all the more important because time is running out on economic questions. The so-called boom in 1973 did feature rising profits and employment, but inflation actually lowered real income for the working man and well over four million people were out of work. In 1974, virtually everyone expects a business recession compounded by the energy crisis.

Such a recession may drive unemployment rates up to the 8 percent level or higher. That means experts coolly predict 7 or 8 million jobless in the coming year, and maybe more. Black unemployment is double that for whites, so an 8 percent overall unemployment rate could well leave 20 percent of Black workers officially jobless, and the true figures are much higher still.

So if anything is in the cards in 1974, it is an economic crunch that could wipe out the gains of the past decade and then some. This prospect may scare the daylights out of you and me, but it hasn't seemed to penetrate the thinking of policy-makers in Washington. Absolutely

nothing is being done to deal with this impending disaster. But if Washington has its blinkers on and won't act, it's up to citizens to put some pressure on their Congressmen to do something. We can't afford to let the coming crunch be dealt with the way inflation, the energy crisis, and the abandonment of civil rights progress was handled.

At a bare minimum, action is required to: set up an emergency citizens' watchdog committee to insure that decisions on energy will fairly distribute the burden of the shortages, especially to see the fuel shortages don't result in lost jobs or reduced services for the poor.

And this is the year to nationalize and liberalize the malfunctioning welfare system to soften the economic blow to the poor. But perhaps most urgent is the need for immediate federal job-creation to insure that every citizen able to work finally gets a job this year.

It will take this kind of positive action to put the country back on the right track and to restore public confidence in the governing institutions of the land.

Irrelevant doctrines of William Shockley

by Bayard Rustin

One hesitates before entering into the debate over Dr. William Shockley, the Stanford professor who has become a fanatical proponent of the idea that Blacks are genetically inferior. Dr. Shockley has already received far more publicity than his theories warrant; even his defenders are careful to disassociate themselves from his views while affirming his constitutional right to express them publicly and without harassment.

Dr. Shockley has said some things that I find reprehensible. But I find it difficult to take the man seriously. Dr. Shockley has no credentials as a geneticist; he has earned his scientific reputation and a Nobel prize because of his work with transistors. And his ideas on race fall beyond the pale of reasonableness.

I would agree with Shockley's most vocal critics that he is a racist in the purest sense of the word. He believes that Black people as a race are inferior to whites both culturally and intellectually, and that this inferiority is transferred from one generation to the next.

Shockley, of course, has gone beyond simply stating his convictions about race and intelligence. He has also proposed that society form a lowering of its standards. This is certainly not the carefully pieced together racial "solution" of Hitler. But it springs from some of the same impulses which drove the Nazis to their policy of genocide.

The point, however, is that hardly anyone in the academic, scientific or political arenas subscribes to such fringe thinking. If anything, the American people are much more likely to believe in the inherent equality of racial minorities than ever before. Even the persistence of racial polarization is, ironically, due largely to Black people having taken advantage of opportunities for advancement and that they now come increasingly into competition with whites, not because whites believe themselves superior.

But while his theories are irrelevant and his proposals ignored, Shockley the man has become a symbol for those who cherish freedom of speech, as well as for those who are less committed to the doctrine. He has been barred from some campuses, and shouted down at others. He was only able to speak at Princeton because the audience was limited, potential disrupters screened out, and the entire campus security

force mobilized. To prevent anyone, no matter how pernicious their views, from exercising their constitutional rights does not advance the cause of democracy nor enhance racial progress. Some of the students who have confronted Dr. Shockley are doubtless less motivated by a legitimate revulsion at a philosophy which is anti-democratic. Others are more cynical; they see Shockley as an ideal target at which to carry on the destructive, confrontationalist tactics which threatened to deprive them of their only issue.

The most effective answer to those who would deny freedom of speech to Shockley lies in the history of the Black struggle. There could never have been a mass, non-violent civil rights movement if the courts had not demanded that the South observe the Bill of Rights. And when basic constitutional freedoms were abrogated, it was most likely Blacks who suffered because of it.

We discovered an important lesson in the days when Black people marched in the South. And that is that the victims of repression very often gain by it. The more brutally Blacks were treated in the South, the more sympathetic was the nation's response, and the more willing was the nation to hear what we had to say.

I am by no means equating the fact that a professor is prevented from addressing a few colleges with the systematic discrimination to which Blacks were subjected. Nevertheless, the same principle applies to Shockley's case each time he is driven from the podium.

The question of whether environment of genetics determines intelligence has been a source of agonizing debate since 1968, when Professor Arthur Jensen published an article saying, in a more muted fashion, much the same thing that Shockley says today. At the time Jensen's article appeared, I felt that the issue was unimportant and nothing has occurred to change my opinion. Everything that has transpired, in fact, has reinforced this view. The economic and social environment of Black people was altered quite dramatically during the 1960s and Black people, as a result, have achieved unprecedented progress.

For Blacks, the challenge is to continue to dedicate ourselves to winning important mass gains, not to creating martyrs out of proponents of irrelevancy.

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