



We see the world
through Black eyes

Portland Black Teachers: Why not unity?

by Herb L. Cawthorne



The press strikes again

Shades of Cleveland Gilcrease!
Now comes Jack Tanner, a Tacoma attorney and the first Black nominated for a federal judgeship in the Northwest. True to form, about the time President Carter's appointment was announced, the daily press began its assault. This time it was the *Seattle Times* with repeated articles questioning Tanner's integrity and attempting to connect him to suspected criminals.

Tanner was doubly bad. He not only had the nerve to establish a law practice in Tacoma and become active in the NAACP in the local and national levels. Worse than that, he represented Indians in their effort to retain their fishing rights.

This is just another of a long line of Black public officials who have been accused and harassed by the white press. It is this pattern that makes us realize each time it happens that it is not just an attack on one man but a nation-wide campaign against any Black who finds himself in a position to make decisions or control funds. The U.S. just isn't ready yet.

Another Point of View

The King is dead

by Lee Ivory
Karen's News Syndicate

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., famed civil rights leader and champion of the philosophy of non-violence, is dead.

He died from a severe case of apathy complicated by character assassination perpetrated by the people who have, for years, professed to love him.

Though he was cut down by an assassin's bullet April 4, 1968, the very eloquent spokesman for the rights of all men was not officially pronounced dead until last week when the friends and followers of the slain martyr realized that he no longer influenced the thoughts and actions of people of goodwill.

Dr. King was born on December 1, 1955, when Rosa Parks, the mother of the civil rights movement, refused to bow to America's racist establishment. His childhood was spent in a series of marches and

protests that gave life to the hope that one day we would all be free of racism and inequality.

Dr. King was a healthy child, though, and his courage and integrity soon found him presenting the Ten Commandments of 1963 to an inspired throng of believers in Washington, D.C. where, as a civil rights teenager, Dr. King preached his now famous sermon, "I Have A Dream."

So well did Dr. King relate his philosophy that millions of people all over the world embraced his course of action. But he died a horrible death after the showing of "King," the highly-distorted version of who he was, what he did, and why he became involved in the civil rights fight. He died when Abby Mann crucified the leader who did more to unify American Blacks than anyone else in the history of this country.

Dr. King died when it became obvious that there will be no end to the severe exploitation of Blacks on television and in the movies.

Dr. King died knowing that the plight of Black Americans is no better today than when he was struck down by hate and poverty and frustration and the conditions that caused him to pick up the gauntlet that so many other Black leaders have dropped on their way to the banks of America.

Dr. King died in great pain when he realized that Black youth in America no longer have a chance for a normal life. They have no jobs, they get a lousy education, they have no real concept of racial responsibility, and they kill each other in the streets of a country that no longer cares.

His dream, which started dying the moment he was shot, is reportedly in serious condition in cities throughout the United States and chances for recovery are slim.

And though doctors of philosophy and masters of sociology abound within the Black race, knowledgeable observers feel that apathy has permeated the body of his dream and it is not expected to live through the night.

Dr. King and his dream leave to mourn him millions of young Blacks who have no direction, thousands of ineffective Black leaders, and millions of people who would love to help if they only knew what to do.

Funeral services for the late Dr. King, and the almost dead dream, are being held each week in the degrading chapel of "Good Times," with the revered "Dr." Jimmie "J.J." Walker officiating.

And there are literally thousands of us who are relieved that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not live to see the depths to which we have sunk.

"The power to define is the power to destroy. If one has the power to define your child as being mentally retarded, then one has the power to sentence him to special classes for the rest of his academic career."

Janice E. Hale
"First World," May/June, 1977

In spite of stifling days of slavery, when Black people were forbidden to expand their intellectual horizons through self-development, gradually Black Americans have gained increasing influence over the development of their children. The struggle has been long and hard; Black mothers and fathers have made untold sacrifices, overcome untold adversities, in order to insure the spiritual and intellectual expansion of their precious children. The struggle continues today.

Nevertheless, as victory over America's well entrenched racism barely peeks its bright light over the distant horizon, there is a growing willingness among Blacks to complacently allow the white dominated institutions of society to define what is a good education for Black children. Too many Blacks stand idle, indifferent in a cacon of false security. The knowledge that Black children deserve a better opportunity does not burn in their hearts like the fire of freedom, and, therefore, they are unable to muster the courage to speak out forcefully on behalf of the future of young Afro-Americans.

The progress Black people have made has never come easy; each morsel of progress has been snatched with determined hands from the reluctant jaws of American prejudice. Progress has never

come without conflict, or tension, or emotion running high. Indeed, when Black rage has been most forcefully translated into a determination to get things done for ourselves, then we made progress.

At the end of the Civil War, it is estimated that less than ten percent of the Black population could read or write. That was little more than 100 years ago, and Black people have fought against vicious racism subtle exclusion, and downright prejudice to improve their situation. Illiteracy among Blacks today is a bit more than six percent, a figure which represents ironlike determination to make a healthy place for ourselves in an America full of racism and unfair social systems.

Today, as some guzzle the intoxicating illusion of security, there is a tendency among Black people, especially those enjoying a relatively comfortable life, to refuse to do much at all in the continuing struggle for Black self-development.

In Portland, this tendency stands out like a bruised jaw on the tender face of a young baby. Just a few weeks ago at a meeting of Blacks who often gather for conversation over breakfast, the complacent tendency among residents here was emphasized in brutal terms: Too many Black people in this city will not work together because so many think their ultimate strength is in disassociating themselves from most things Black, particularly controversial issues. Young and eager Black men and women who understand the obligations of their history will be "eaten" alive by the complacent network of the Black leadership. They seem to respect white-dominated power structure, which often laughs at them, more than they respect their own people.

Vincent Harding has emphasized that one of the roles we must accept is that of identifying the "enemy" within ourselves. The widely acclaimed historian said, "To identify the enemy is to point to our unspoken desire for white models, white recognition, white legitimization." It is this desire, and perhaps only this desire, that causes so many of our people in Portland to deny with their inaction that we must fight for the cause of Black freedom and equality, even if that may mean a temporary personal setback. The gains over time will compensate for all losses.

The modern apathy regarding school desegregation in Portland stems in part from the willingness to allow someone else the chance to define the dimensions of Black education. Somehow, white teachers and administrators know better than we do. This is what those in control of the Portland Public School system would lead us to believe; and it seems to be what many of its Black employees want to believe.

Black teachers and administrators in the Portland public schools will have to unite and begin to define unequivocally what is needed for Black children to learn the skills which will make them the masters of their futures. There is no way around the fact that Black teachers united in the brotherhood of common heritage, can do more than any group to advance education in this city.

Everyone working alone -- each subject to intimidation and worried about promotion and tenure -- will not serve to advance the cause. Without carelessly throwing away a hard earned career, Black educators in the public schools could do so much more if they were, as a whole, more willing to return a small portion of the gift their triumphant history has given them.

Through the eyes of Mr. W...

by Harold Williams

(This is the completion of "The Inner Soul Of The Black Man" by Mrs. Cal R. Williams.)

He walks the halls of Congress and pleads for justice toward humanity and battles the disgust of injustice. But the Black man will find in the wee hours of the morning that his only true saviour is the universal God.

We talk of education, he knows even though he's been short-changed and not allowed to be exposed to the best of the best, the most knowledge, he will still achieve and see the light at the end of the tunnel.

When his own has turned against him and cried out in the halls of the universe that he is weak, that being his wife, he must take up his dignity and his pride and move on. For he must toil alone for many are not willing to face, seem to be aware of what the Black man goes through.

He looks in his children's eyes and wonders if death would be the simple way out. He looks at their tears and knows that their tears are not the tears from the raging river but from the raging filth of society that is cast on their weak bodies

not yet strong enough to endure and not yet able to understand the torture that they must go through for a glimpse of hope. In spite of this, the Black man has to be, and must be, the understanding father, husband, and humanitarian receiving nothing in return.

To be a Black man is to give the ultimate, to breathe the leftover foul air, to touch the green grass that has long since been burned. To be Black is to go beyond slavery, is to go beyond torture, lost dignity, but you must reach the mountain top of universal peace for mankind.

The Black man has made his contributions, not in opposition to the contributions of the Black woman, but in support of her. But whether she and the world have ever recognized it or not, the Black man has been the substance of the Black woman's strength, he is from which she draws her strength as though you draw water from a well.

The Black man stands before the universe as the likes of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey and others will come before us who stood in the small tunnels of injustice and spoke as

loud as they could so their voices could be echoed across the valleys of justice and heard on the top of the mountain of compassion that we will endure, that we will survive as a people and that he will be the leader of leaders in spite of the enemies that try to destroy him, in spite of the cancer that invades his mind, in spite of the hatred that tears at his soul his responsibility is to give, give, in order that his children someday can give and receive.

The Black man must stand up now and be heard where no others are willing to be heard such as the voices of Vernon Jordan who is the head of the National Urban League is speaking out against unemployment and injustice, poor housing for Black people at a time when he could hide away and have a few moments of comfort for himself, but his is chosen to come to the front and speak for our people.

The Black man is beyond anything that this universe can ever imagine, is beyond what his wife is capable of understanding, is beyond what his mother is capable of giving birth to.

(Please turn to Page 3 Column 3)

DEATH OF A MOVEMENT-APRIL 4, 1968



Senior citizen: Power of the ballot

by Ron Wyden

Over 360,000 Oregonians sixty years or older are eligible to vote in Oregon's primary elections this spring. On the basis of previous elections, it can be predicted that seniors will total about 25% of all Oregonians actually voting this May. For the next two months politicians will correspond with them, visit them, eat with them, and hug and fuss them for basically one reason: they have the votes.

Significantly, the seniors are well prepared for the onslaught of politicians about to descend on their senior centers, meal sites, and churches. In a booklet released by the Oregon Council of Senior Advocates, they have documented the voting record of all state legislators during the 1977 session on key issues in the area of nursing homes, dentures, housing, tax relief, utility costs, and more. Politicians speaking before senior audiences have been put on notice that one or more copies of the booklet will be circulating through the group.

Senior activism is further heightened by two ballot campaigns of special interest to elderly guarding a small, fixed income. Specifically they are:

1.) A referendum to fund general obligation bonds for low-income elderly housing. This measure will be on the May Ballot.

2.) A initiative that would permit licensed technicians to make and sell false teeth directly to the public, which under current law is illegal. Signatures are now being gathered to put this measure, called "denturism," before the people on the November ballot.

The denturism initiative, strongly opposed by the Oregon Dental Association, has special significance. Senior activists lost their campaign for denturism in the last moments of the 1977 legislature by one vote, and want very much to win at the ballot box what they lost in Salem. Victory on this measure will give the senior movement a tremendous booster shot of enthusiasm and new strength -- and make many lobbyists for special

interests shudder over the new possibilities of senior power.

All this activity should serve to warn campaigning politicians: this spring, more than ever, seniors will be politically involved and issue oriented. A candidate's puffery and image building will not impress them -- but reasoned analyses of how to cope with -- inflation, develop new energy sources, improve health care, and

check government waste will score points for the campaigner. Seniors will take the time to study the statements of the candidates in the Voters Pamphlet, read the newspapers, attend candidates Forums, and question the candidates who come to their doors. And that, to their credit, is a lot more than can be said for other age groups of Oregonians.

Letters to the Editor

Support prison column

To the Editor:

We support heartily all the avenues through the media the *Portland Observer* has opened for many of the inmates at Oregon State Penitentiary, Oregon Women Correctional Center and Oregon Correctional Institution.

"The Behind the Walls," column has made it very possible for every prisoner to express their talents in poems, as well as writing stories of their success and failures in life, whether they be in an institution or on the street.

We hope the *Portland Observer* and the "Behind the Walls" staff continue to

supply the general public with the worthy information, as it has throughout the past year. Job well done, keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Don Eaton
Dennis R. Gordon
Ed Bradshaw
Ceil S. Norton
Deon Washington
Jack Annette
Jack Dosier
Peter Gonzale
Elmer Field
David Martinez

Wants friends

To the Editor:

My name is James Patrick Quinn and at this time I am confined at the Southern Ohio Correctional facility at Lucasville, Ohio.

I am paying a debt to society for a crime I committed four years ago. Since being here I have lost all contact with family and friends, due to my confinement. I have fourteen months left before I am eligible for release, and as yet I don't have any place to go. If I can't find

anyone to sponsor me out on parole I am doomed here until my maximum date of release. What I'm really seeking is correspondence of someone that can help me in my quest for freedom.

I am 26 years old, six feet, 183 pounds, would like to hear from concerned people.

Respectfully,
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Lucasville, Ohio 45699



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