

Vernon Jordan shot

(See below)



Black United Front and supporters file through the School Board meeting in silent protest, calling on the School Board to keep promises made in August. Issues include: parent involvement in



staff selection, increase of Black staff, multi-cultural curriculum, teacher training, a second middle school in the community, equitable disciplinary procedures.

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Principals attack Black United Front

The Portland Elementary School Principals Association came to the defense of Superintendent Robert Blanchard and school principals who have been criticized by the Black United Front.

Bill Beck, president of the organization and principal of Creston School, said the organization "finds it necessary to enter the political arena to speak out on the recent attacks by special interest groups on the Portland School System, specifically, the Superintendent, Dr. Robert Blanchard, the Board, and most recently, two of our colleague principals, Mildred Wait and Leroy Moore."

Calling Blanchard a nationally recognized leader in education, Beck credited him with initiating the three area system that "marked the beginning of real citizen involvement in the Portland schools," with wise budgeting of public funds, and of improving curriculum and instruction.

Beck advocated the retention of Blanchard as superintendent in the light of two important issues the district faces - desegregation and school closures. "Dr. Blanchard has demonstrated quality leadership and a true understanding of the breadth of this city. We can ill afford to lose these qualities in a school superintendent at this, a more critical time."

While deploring the "attack" of the BUF on the superintendent, Board and principals, Beck launched his own attack on the Board. "The new Board of Education has had

difficulty in bringing itself together the important educational issues of the District. It appears they have begun to realize how complete and challenging the situations are and will, increasingly be able to see that all the problems facing the District cannot and should not be blamed on a superintendent who is following Board orders."

Beck called the BUF call for the resignation of principal Leroy Moore from King and Mildred Wait from her assignment to the new Eliot middle school, "insulting that two principals who have distinguished themselves as effective educational leaders over a period of many years should be asked to resign, solely because one is white and the other may have made a remark about the potential length of a future boycott of the Portland schools."

He said it is unfair to principals to have their performances publicly judged "on the bias and opinions of special interest groups based on their own political needs."

Beck said he believes it is time for all parties to sit down and discuss the issues and reach a compromise or settlement. The BUF, he said, were invited to a meeting to discuss the criteria and traits of the person needed for the new school but refused to attend, then they criticized the selection. What is needed is mutual respect.

In response to questioning by the press, Beck declined to comment on the dissatisfaction of Black parents

with the school system and declined to comment on whether Black parents believe they receive respect from the school administration.

Beck, who was formerly principal at Sabin and Beaumont, in response to questions about the poor academic performance of Black students in the school system, said there are a great number of programs in the Albina schools "and attempts to do as effective job as we can." The receiving schools also have a number of programs to assist minority transfer students, including the McPhearson Award Program. "We need to be critical but we deserve credit for the job we do and the efforts we make."

The meeting referred to by Beck was attended by school administrators and representatives of the community. Ronnie Herndon, co-chairman of the BUF, said he declined the invitation because, "we will not participate in an unjust process. Those who did attend overwhelmingly called for a Black principal and you see how much good that did. They appointed the person they wanted without regard to what the parents said."

In the Thursday night BUF meeting Herndon called for the resignation of Mrs. Wait from the

Eliot position (not from the school district) to clear the way for the appointment of a person acceptable to the community. He also called for the resignation of Leroy Moore from King because the remarks he made to the press regarding the boycott showed insensitivity.

Moore had previously been charged with insensitivity by many parents when he was quoted in the press as saying he sometimes wondered if there were any "normal" children.

Beck, who was principal of Beaumont during the controversy over whether that school would become a middle school, also caught the attention of Sabin parents when he promised in a letter to Beaumont parents that there would be room for all Beaumont K-5th graders at Alameda - that none would be forced to attend Sabin.

The "old" School Board kept that promise, assuring that all Beaumont children could attend Alameda, thus ignoring an opportunity to desegregate Sabin.

Several principals contacted by the *Observer* said they had not been contacted by the nine member PAESP executive committee and knew nothing about the press conference or the organization's statement.

Jordan condition critical

Vernon Jordan, executive director of the National Urban League, was shot in Fort Wayne, Indiana, following a speech there. He was struck twice in the abdomen.

According to Bob Williams, spokesman for the Fort Wayne Urban League, there were no known threats on Jordan's life and the motive is unknown. He said the speech was "non controversial" and well accepted. Police have no suspect or motive.

Fort Wayne mayor Winfried Moses said there have been no racial incidents in Fort Wayne and Jordan had spoken there before.

Jordan has been executive director of the Urban League since 1972. He spoke in Portland last Friday.

As the *Observer* goes to press, Jordan is still in surgery with his condition reported as "critical but stable".



VERNON JORDAN

Contracts available

The Southwestern Washington Minority Contractors Association, which opened officially in April, was recently awarded \$800,000 in contracts for minority businesses. According to director Nate Proby, the association will have approximately \$1.8 million in contracts available in the near future. The Corps of Engineers has notified Proby that minority businesses will be involved in the St. Helens clean-up.

Among the contracts currently available are highway construction related jobs of from \$25,000 to \$500,000 in southern Washington. For information call Proby at 206-256-2317.

Jordan addresses Urban League banquet

(Grassroot News, N.W.) Friday, May 23, The Portland Branch of the Urban League held their annual dinner. Among the guest speakers was Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., President of the National Urban League. Jordan has been the executive officer for eight years. He previously served as executive director of the United Negro College Fund.

Jordan contends that America has gone through periods of reform and periods of apathy. He believes that America is in one of her regressive moods. "The gains that Blacks and other minorities have

made is on an insecure shaky toehold, deeply vulnerable to social, political and economic factors on which Blacks and other minorities have minimal influence. For all the progress some of us has made, more than half of all Black people in America are boat people without boats."

Jordan believes that the social problems that were formed in the 1960s were labeled Black programs and were soon demolished when this country turned right, although these programs helped more whites than Blacks. "It put white families into better housing, white kids into job training programs and white

mothers on the food stamp rolls."

He went on to say, "The current battle of the budget illustrates the problems facing white and Black poor today. In the name of fighting inflation the administration has revised an already tight budget. It has given up major new programs while congress wants to cut Urban Aid, Public Service jobs, and even food stamps."

There are many who believe that the Urban League has lost touch with the urban masses and whose policies are in accord with the status quo, whether or not the implementation of some national and local policies border on neutrality.

Behind Black urban rumblings: An economic no-man's-land

By Martin Brown

(PNS) The twin eruptions of Mt. St. Helens and in Miami have more in common than one might expect.

The earthquake which blew the lid off the volcano was merely the final step in a complex series of geological tensions which had been building for many years. Similarly, the acquittal of four policemen charged with killing a Black man was, like the earthquake, only the spark that ignited long-standing social building in Miami's Black community. In neither eruption was there a clear understanding of what those tensions really stemmed from.

In the case of the Miami riot, however, certain economic trends underlay the overt racism which

sparked the riot. And it is clear those economic realities are not unique to Miami; they are heating up the social magma in every American City.

The fact is that after decades of struggle toward social and economic well-being, real progress for a large proportion of Black Americans has been halted, or even reversed. The setbacks stem not only from personal and institutional racism, but are deeply imbedded in profound structural changes that are reshaping the national economy of the 1980s. Chief among those changes is the rapid dismantling of the American manufacturing sector, which for decades served as a vital pathway for Blacks to the American promise of a well-being job and economic security.

If few people understand the economic changes, the Black urban poor of Miami and other cities do understand the results: The yawning gap between poverty and affluence is increasingly difficult to bridge. Where once -- even recently -- there

proportion of Black Americans has been halted, or even reversed. The setbacks stem not only from personal and institutional racism, but are deeply imbedded in profound structural changes that are reshaping the national economy of the 1980s. Chief among those changes is the rapid dismantling of the American manufacturing sector, which for decades served as a vital pathway for Blacks to the American promise of a well-being job and economic security.

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was hope and aspiration, today there is increasing frustration and a sense of betrayal.

The reversal of recent gains for Blacks follows a time when the old barriers to full social and economic integration were being battered down and the future looked encouraging. The ratio of Black to white family income improved steadily for Blacks during the 1960s, according to the census bureau. But by the mid-70s the ratio had peaked and gone into decline.

Similarly, the ratio of Black to white unemployment improved during the 1960s, but by 1978, Black employment was again more than twice as severe as white unemployment. And while Black employment in blue collar industrial work

improved dramatically between 1940 and 1977 (from 38 per cent of the Black working force to 59 per cent), it was precisely those kinds of jobs which were slated to disappear with the decline and exodus of the manufacturing sector.

Indeed, the manufacturing sector, which provided Blacks with their major employment and income gains during the mid-century, is still vanishing at an alarming pace. Thirty years ago half of all workers were employed in manufacturing, mining, construction, transportation and utilities. By 1978, only about one-third of all workers were employed in this sector. According to the United Auto Workers Union, some 15 million blue collar jobs have been lost in the last eight years.

The massive decline has left behind what many economists call a two-tiered economy -- one tier featuring high-level, high-paid professional/technical workers and the other offering low-paid jobs in the booming service sector, with little or no opportunity for advancement.

The best jobs continue to be held primarily by white Americans whose geographic mobility, educational credentials and network of personal contacts provide their entry into the upper tier of the economy. Fully 40 per cent of all white working men are employed in professional, managerial or administrative positions. Only about 12 per cent of the Black male labor force is employed in these positions. (Please turn to page 10 col 1)