

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Cloak and dagger government

The veil of secrecy is steadily being tightened as the US government seeks to restrict information available to its citizens and others.

The government seeks to exclude the FBI and the CIA from the Freedom of Information law, restricting citizens' access to these agencies' files on them. There is also a law pending that would make it a federal crime to reveal the names of intelligence agents or even of FBI informants.

Currently there are 21 bills in Congress to restrict use by the press of Freedom of Information Act.

Also there is a bill that would allow wire-tapping of reporters and editors by federal agencies without a warrant.

In addition to the crack down on the press' right to know and to inform the public anything other than that information stamped with the approval of the various government agencies, the government has moved to remove from public access foreign news that has not been filtered through AP or UPI. In May, delivery of newspapers from Cuba was stopped by the Treasury Department.

Many of the nation's universities are concerned about the new secrecy requirements in federal research grants. The new rules make it a federal offense to even discuss with a foreign scientist any research results that might improve military technology without State Department approval. The rules bar participation of foreign students, make research sites "off limits", and could interfere with scientists' participation in international professional meetings. The Pentagon is trying to monitor and restrict all research that might lead to weapons innovation, but distinguishing these from "basic research" is difficult if not impossible. All of this makes the logistics of research difficult - to say nothing of academic freedom.

And the government wants its citizens to watch each other. Although most theft of secrets is by corporations against their competitors, the public is being warned against "spies." A public service radio spot discusses "white collar crime" and asks workers to watch for fellow employees who might be selling corporate secrets to foreign nations - our "enemies" abroad. Listeners are asked to report any suspicious activity to the FBI.

## Fighting for neighborhoods . . .

Former Mayor Neil Goldschmidt was in the audience at the Moday School Board meeting to show his support for the Board's action in closing Adams High School.

Among those who praised the board's action were Doug Capps, former assistant to Mayor Goldschmidt and campaign aid to Charlotte Beeman and Dean Gisvold - the new board members who reversed the decision of the previous board to retain Adams; Ernie Bonner, director of the City Planning Bureau under Goldschmidt; Pauline Anderson, president elect of the City Club and wife of Port of Portland executive Lloyd Anderson; and Sue Keil, former school district administrator and currently City/schools liaison

for Mayor Ivancie.

One has to wonder why these residents of Alameda, Vancouver and the Oregon Yacht Club are so happy about the closure of Adams -- it's not their school.

Or perhaps they are just happy that everything is under control again. As Capps said, with Dean and Pauline in charge the board will be more decisive and give better leadership. We must wonder, though, better leadership for whom?

This does seem to be a reversal for Goldschmidt though. It wasn't long ago that he fought Dr. Blanchard over plans to close schools in Southeast. And he has always talked for neighborhoods . . .

## A new kind of urban rioter

By Dr. Manning Marable

Two recently published reports - one assessing the Miami race uprising of May, 1980, and the other a review of the impending fiscal crisis of major metropolitan centers in the aftermath of Reganomics - have major implications for the future of American society. The 48 page study in Miami, funded in part by the Ford Foundation, concluded that the Black uprising was "unprecedented in this century."

Several factors discussed in the report seem particularly significant. In most urban uprising in the past, the great majority of those arrested by police and/or National Guardsmen possessed prior arrest records. In Watts, the report points out, about 73 percent of 3,435 adults arrested had prior records. In Newark two years later, 7.2 percent of 1,169 adults had records. But the Miami Rebellion broke this pattern: less than one-third of the Black adults arrested had prior records. These statistics are confirmed by my impressions of Liberty City's ghetto, where I witnessed or personally talked to scores of so-called "looters" who were school teachers, postal workers and mechanics. These were men and women of all ages, cutting across a wider socioeconomic profile than ever before experienced in an American urban uprising. The study continues, many of those arrested "held jobs and did not otherwise fit the stereotypical image of a rioter."

There are two forms which the phenomenon of urban violence can assume. This first is the classic pattern of the J-curve, in which members of an historically disadvantaged or oppressed community may experience a general rise in socioeconomic expectations. Public policies toward the oppressed subgroup are liberalized; a greater degree of social/cultural mobility is allowed; civil and political societies distribute more fiscal resources to those in need. Philanthropies assist in creating an improved educational and social environment for the disadvantaged by sponsoring a plethora of well-meaning projects. But such projects were never funded on such a scale as

to empower a broad strata of Black people.

Most sectors of the oppressed community never benefit from these liberal reforms. The expectation of fundamental reform has been created, and not unlike "Pandora's Box," gives birth to an almost euphoric and idealistic demand for permanent change. Since liberal administrations inevitably bureaucratize "change," and because many sincere but often middle-headed professionals without any real social empathy for the oppressed direct the reformist programs, many generally result in an expanding mood of frustration and alienation within the lower classes. Any incident -- the needless incursion of policemen into a Black "joint" on any Saturday night, for instance - can spark an explosion. The rioting that occurs is nihilism armed with a molotov cocktail. The symbols of the system are burned to the ground; those in the streets who are picked up by the police have usually been in the city jail before. Between 1964 to 1969, this was the classic pattern of urban and racial violence.

But Miami was different. The rioters were actually urban rebels. They were not those with nothing to lose, "but their chains." They marched to the very center of the city, chanting, "we want justice." The rebels understood, perhaps implicitly, that the system which controlled their lives, and the life of their community, was structurally unable to give them justice. In lieu of a broad-based, serious political leadership that could have been channelled the collective outrage into a radical social agenda, the rebellion struck "spontaneously yet systematically" at whites, policemen, white-owned property, and even at the establishment Negroes who counselled patience and calm.

The recent release of a Congressional study, written by the Joint Economic Committee, raises the possibility of more Miamis in the coming months. Based on an extensive critique of 275 cities across the country, the report predicts that the Regan administration's budget cuts will levy a deathblow against

urban areas. "Because of the magnitude of the proposed Federal cuts and the abruptness with which they are likely to be implemented, many economic development initiatives will be reversed," it argued. "The population of many cities will be forced to forgo certain service and to pay more for others, and an increasing number of cities will find themselves on the brink of fiscal collapse."

Of the 36 cities surveyed with populations exceeding 250,000, the overwhelming majority were in severe fiscal straits. About 70 percent recorded deficits in 1980, and almost 90 percent expect deficits this year. On average, these cities receive about one-third of their revenues from the state and federal governments. Any substantial reduction in federal financial outlays would wreck havoc with urban budgets. Outlays for water and sewage lines, streets, libraries, etc., would be seriously reduced. "In the near term," the study suggests, "short of imperiling the health and safety of its residents, cities will have to raise taxes, user charges and fees to compensate for diminished Federal assistance." The burden of the fiscal crisis, which include Birmingham, Jacksonville, Miami, Oakland, Baltimore, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Nashville, Memphis, New York City and Newark, all have significant minority communities.

As of this writing, the nightmare of Reganomics seems very likely to be ratified and signed. What will be its net impact on urban crisis?

Of the short-term prospects, there can be no doubt: a disastrous and perhaps irreversible decline in the quality of economic and social life for millions of Americans. Even the Congressional report described the probable results of the new budget as "grim." Social services depending on federal support will grind to a standstill; public school teachers, administrators and staff will be fired; public transportation will be forced to increase fares and cut service at off-peak hours; quality of health care available at out-patient clinics and public hospitals will decline. The prospects for more urban unrest on the scale of Miami appear inevitable.

## Save the Voting Rights Act

by Eddie N. Williams  
Joint Center for Political Studies

The Voting Rights Act, first enacted in 1965 and extended in 1970 and in 1975, is now before the U.S. Congress. It is scheduled to expire in August, 1982, and faces an uncertain future. The Voting Rights Act has been the single most effective protection of the right to vote for Blacks and Hispanics. The May, 1981, issue of FOCUS, the Joint Center for Political Studies' monthly newsletter, was devoted entirely to the Voting Rights Act. This reflects the Joint Center's very strong conviction, buttressed by research as well as keen observations, that the Voting Rights Act should be renewed for another ten years.

The Voting Rights Act is needed now more than ever. It is needed both as a protection and as an incentive to minorities in the political arena. It is needed as a bulwark against slick devices to discourage minority political participation altogether or to dilute their votes and mute their voices.

There is yet another compelling reason for renewal of the Voting Rights Act. It is clear now that the decade of the eighties will confront all of us with new realities flowing from conservative politics and economic stringencies.

Already the potential effects of a drastic reduction in the federal budget are well known. The promised and much hoped for "safety net" cannot possibly spare all those now strapped in poverty and defenseless against the long knives of the budget-cutters. The retreat of the federal government from the management and oversight of certain social programs will inevitably mean that minorities and the poor will have a harder time having their voices heard and their needs met at the state and local level.

Under these circumstances, the only real safety net that minorities and the poor can rely on is their own capacity to influence the political

system. As voters and as public officials, they can seek to steer the flow of drizzling federal dollars to those in greatest need. The Voting Rights Act, in large measure, makes this possible.

Renewal of the Voting Rights Act is high on the agenda of Blacks and Hispanics. However, as with other high priority issues, they can hardly afford to stand on the sidelines hoping someone will rescue the most important piece of civil rights legislation ever passed. Minorities themselves must lead the fight for renewal. They must demonstrate -- in the states and cities as well as in Washington -- just how much importance they attach to the Act.

There are a lot of potential supporters of the Voting Rights Act who are waiting to see if we care enough to go to the mat for its survival. If we do not, they can easily assuage their conscience by saying: "If Blacks and Hispanics are not willing to fight for their voting rights, why should I bother?" On the other hand, a strong demonstration of support by minorities in all quarters -- leadership, churches, organizations, students, workers,

professionals, indeed everybody right down to the individual voter -- will serve as a magnet for others. At the same time, such massive support for the Voting Rights Act will help to open the eyes of certain members of Congress who are now opposed to the Act.

Protecting the right to vote is not an issue for minorities alone. It is an issue for all Americans. Businessmen who sincerely believe in corporate social responsibility can find in the effects of the Voting Rights Act many reasons for adding their support for its renewal. Institutions of higher education and the scholars who run them know full well how important the Act has been, and still is, in protecting minority political rights. The South, as a region, was liberated by the Voting Rights Act, and its leaders should be in the forefront of efforts to prevent any return to the dark past we would all like to forget.

Many of the traditional civil rights allies have rallied to the support of voting rights. That is encouraging. However, more allies are needed.

### SUMMER 1981

...IN ORDER TO EQUALIZE THE BURDEN OF SCHOOL CLOSURES BETWEEN THE BLACK AND WHITE COMMUNITIES THE SCHOOL BOARD HAS DECIDED TO CLOSE ADAMS HIGH THIS SUMMER AND JACKSON HIGH NEXT SUMMER.



### SUMMER 1982

WE'RE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT ENOUGH MONEY WAS SAVED BY CLOSING ADAMS HIGH LAST YEAR THAT IT NOW WILL NOT BE NECESSARY TO CLOSE JACKSON HIGH AFTER ALL...



Bruce Broussard  
Editor/Publisher

### Portland Observer

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The Portland Observer is a champion of justice, equality and liberation; an alert guard against social evils; a thorough analyst and critic of discriminatory practices and policies; a sentinel to warn of impending and existing racist trends and practices; and a defender against persecution and oppression.

The real problems of the minority population will be viewed and presented from the perspective of their causality: unrestrained and chronically entrenched racism. National and international arrangements that prolong and increase the oppression of Third World peoples shall be considered in the context of their exploitation and manipulation by the colonial nations, including the United States, and their relationship to this nation's historical treatment of its Black population.

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