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EDITORIAL COMMENTARY Victory...

A state chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights whose suitability for the office was challenged by the Anti-Defamation League for favorably reviewing an anti-Semitic and racist book has resigned his post, the League has learned.

The announcement of the departure of Dr. Ralph Scott, chairman of the Iowa State Advisory Committee to the Civil Rights Commission, came in a letter (dated July 5) to Jeffrey P. Sinensky, director of ADL's Civil Rights Division, from Murray Friedman, acting chairman of the Commission.

Mr. Sinensky had told the Commission in early May that Dr. Scott was unsuited for the post because of his "insensitivity" to racial and religious minorities. In his review of "The Dispossessed Majority," a 584-page book written under the pseudonym of Wilmot Robertson, Dr. Scott called the volume "valuable" because it throws a "bright, clear light on facts which our politicians have kicked into dark corners. For those 'Majority' Americans who seek to understand their cultural heritage, this book is a family must."

"The Dispossessed Majority" charges that the United States has degenerated over time because its Northern European majority has been displaced by such "inferior" peoples as Blacks, Hispanics, Jews and persons of Mediterranean origin.

The book vilifies Jews as hav-

ing such traits as "intrusiveness, disputatiousness and haggling" and alleges that they are disproportionately represented in the "inner circles" of the American government. In discussing the Jewish "problem," the book declares that "separation is obviously part of the solution."

The book also asserts that the Northern European race "has managed to soar a little higher above the animal kingdom than the other divisions of mankind." The author also claims that "the more Negroes are helped ... the more they progress, the more America as a nation seems to regress."

In his letter to the League, Mr. Friedman thanked ADL for its disclosures about Dr. Scott and said he concurred with the agency's assessment that Scott's "enthusiastic review of a bigoted book is inconsistent with the attitudes and role of a civil rights official."

Expressing his gratification that Dr. Scott has resigned, Mr. Sinensky said the continued presence in an important civil rights post of a person who defends racist views is "an affront to those working to advance the cause of civil rights in this country."

Mr. Sinensky pointed out that the "author" of "The Dispossessed Majority," Wilmot Robertson, is the pen-name of "a Southern-based propagandist who also publishes *Instauration*, an equally racist and anti-Semitic magazine."

Teacher shortage

Early results from an ongoing NEA (National Education Association) survey indicate that shortages of qualified teachers will undermine the quality of education offered next year by the nation's public elementary and secondary schools.

The NEA survey has so far collected data from 128 of the nation's 190 largest school districts—those with enrollments of 25,000 or more and the largest districts in 10 small states (Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming). These school districts together represent just over a fifth of the 39.8 million U.S. public school students and over a quarter of the nation's teachers.

For some large school districts, the NEA data show, the search for qualified teachers will be more difficult this year than last. Results already reveal 34,880 unfilled positions for the '87-'88 school year, a significant increase above the 32,000 vacancies reported at this time last year. And more vacancies are expected to be revealed before the NEA survey is completed.

Nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of the 128 school districts say they have more teaching vacancies for fall 1987 than fall 1986. Half of these vacancies are at the elementary level, and half at the secondary school level.

In the secondary schools, the most acute shortage of teachers is in bilingual education, where about 84 percent of all positions will be vacant. Almost half—44 percent—of openings in special education are vacant, while 34.5 percent of teacher positions in science and 31.1 percent in math may remain unfilled.

The estimated vacancy rate overall—the ratio of reported vacancies to total full time positions—appears to be about 7 percent, according to the NEA survey data collected so far, with averages higher in the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Western regions of the country. Government projections that the national teacher shortage will increase fourfold by 1992 assume an annual vacancy rate of 6 percent per year.

EDITORIAL / OPINION

News Media Must Be Held Accountable



Concerning the 'Observer's' Commentary: 7/13/88. While newspapers, magazines, television and radio do inform and entertain, they first and foremost shape and collectivize an audience. I'm inclined to believe, Messages, Attitudes, Emotions, Information, Lies and Distortions of all kinds permeate our consciousness—and big stakes are involved. For, to control the consciousness of a people is to control a significant element of their political destinies. The *Portland Observer* provide an educational forum for the expression of the ideologies and attitudes of the Sisters and Brothers in the community.

Describing the function of the American Reporter, Douglas Cater, writing in his book 'The Fourth Branch of Government' (1959) said, "The reporter is the recorder of government but he is also a participant. He operates in a system in which power is divided. He as much as anyone, and more than a great many, helps to shape the course of government. He is the indispensable broker and middle man among the sub-governments of Washington. He can choose from the myriad events that see beneath the surface of government, which to describe, which to ignore. He can illumine policy and notably assist in giving it sharpness and clarity; just as easily, he can prematurely expose policy and, as with an undeveloped film, cause its destruction. At his worst, operating with arbitrary and faulty standards, he can be an agent of disorder and confusion. At his best, he can exert a creative influence on Washington politics."

In spite of this great vehicle (the press) at our command, we still were inadequately prepared, because of a faulty background, to cope with the challenge of Afrika. Twenty years ago Afrika was a great yawning gap in Amerika's knowledge of the world. However, preceding this great gap there had been carried on since the early days of the slave trade a campaign of falsification of the true situation in Afrika. For example, geographies and history books consistently depicted the Afrikan in an unfavorable light in comparison with the other men of the world. If you saw a picture of a Frenchman he was a well-dressed, well-demeanored person. The same was true of a Britisher, or any other European. However, the picture of the Afrikan that constantly stared you in the face was one of a man in a grass dress with rings around his ankles, a spear in his hand, dancing around a boiling pot with a caucasoid man in it. The written descriptions of the Afrikan, in the main, were equally as inaccurate. For centuries this was the stereotype of the Afrikan.

This description persisted until at a point, under the pressure of world travel and improved communication facilities, we began to realize that our view of Afrika and the Afrikan was a faulty one. At this point we began to realize the military and economic importance of Afrika, but we had no background within which to straighten out our thinking. What had really happened was that those colonial powers who benefited by the lack of knowledge of what was really in Afrika, like the owners of the Belgium Congo and the other areas of tremendous natural resources, had found it desirable to blackout the real truth about those areas and their inhabitants so that they might continue to exploit without competition.

The vehicle used to create and maintain this false impression was the European and Amerikan press. Meanwhile the colonial powers produced their own "information services," which were widely distributed and not only fantastically deceptive, but were downright misleading. This left us tremendously disadvantaged in dealing with the problems of an emerging Afrika and Afrikans, which we suddenly found a compelling necessity to cope with. So inadequately prepared were we and so inept were our approaches that Julius Nyerere, one of the East Afrikan indigenous leaders said of us: "You have missed the political bus."

Cater in his book refers to the press as an agent of disorder and confusion. In the Congo I saw the Amerikan press as an "agent of disorder and confusion." For example, it was the Amerikan press that was most vehement in its denunciation of President Kasavubu for signing the "conciliation agreement" with his Prime Minister Lumumba, an agreement which Kasavubu under pressure subsequently repudiated. I saw and heard members of the Amerikan press almost plaintively say, referring to Kasavubu, "Why did he do it—when he had Lumumba right where he wanted him?" In addition to their writing, Amerikan reporters in Afrika use their personal influence with leaders there to foster policies they and their government wish followed. They know that a "good or bad press" can make or break an Afrikan leader.

I believe, a fairer relationship between the caucasoid owned media and the Black community will come to pass only if the Black community is prepared to make them come to pass by political means. ALL I want you to understand is that the only way we will affect the caucasoid media significantly is the same way in which we will bring about any social change in our nation—through movement, political, social movement of masses of people banded together and determined to be free.



Repairing The Safety Net

by John E. Jacob

One of the prime tasks of the next president will be to repair the safety net—the social programs that have been drilled full of holes over the past eight years.

Traditional wisdom says that the damage done the safety net programs is the fault of Washington alone. That's largely true, but the states bear a heavy responsibility, too.

Means-tested programs are largely financed by the federal government, but run by the states. The most familiar safety net program, Aid To Families With Dependent Children, is one such program.

According to a recent analysis of safety net programs by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in 32 states the maximum cash benefit under AFDC for a family of three without other income is less than half of the poverty line. Obviously such benefit levels are nowhere near what is necessary to support a minimal standard of life.

The poverty line itself is an artificial construct, originally designed to determine the absolute minimum a family needs to feed itself in a short-term emergency period. But it's become a full-year figure based on a formula that takes no account of rising food and rent costs, or of the need for income necessary to get by longer-term.

The study also found that only a little more than half of the states permit AFDC benefits for families where the father is present but unemployed. And it also found the only about half the states supplement the basic minimum federal benefits available to the aged, blind and disabled poor through the Supplemental Security Income Program.

Unemployment insurance is another key safety net program that's declined. A decade ago over forty percent of the jobless received state unemployment benefits. Last year, just over thirty percent did.

The study also found that only ten states, including the District of Columbia, offered property tax relief to poor people who are neither disabled nor elderly.

And most shocking of all, a majority of states imposed income tax on families whose incomes are below the poverty line.

Taxing the small incomes of people in poverty who barely have enough to pay the rent and buy enough food to sustain life is unconscionable.

We've also seen tightened eligibility requirements that have shoved people off the food stamp and Medicaid rolls, and reduced benefits. That was done by the federal government, but instead of filling the gaps, most states appear to have gone along with the policy of squeezing the poor.

The Center's study shows that it's not just southern states or relatively low-income states that have tightened the screws on the poor, but many that rank in the top half of states in such measures as per capita income.

Such misguided policies on the national and state levels have deepened the social problems facing the nation and widened the gap between the poor and the affluent.

Add to this the fact that key opportunity programs such as Head Start and Job Corps have been cut drastically, and you see the emergence of a callous policy that helps sustain a large underclass with little hope for advancement.

Such socially destructive policies have to be reversed, and the candidates have to be pinned down on how they intend to restore the safety net a decent society places beneath all of its citizens.

Perspectives



by Professor McKinley Burt

We Are All 'At Risk'

by Professor McKinley Burt

Have we made it according to *Honony Magazine* standards? Got the right scotch on the bar—the right car in the garage? (Have you got a garage?). Are you sending your daughter to the 'right Black school' in the South? Did you escape from the inner-Northeast area, and now reside in a 'safe', affluent neighborhood? Today's scary urban scenario should tell you that you are still AT RISK!

By the end of the 1930's, East Saint Louis, Illinois was a target of derision for the Black 'elite' and professionals of Saint Louis, Missouri where I attended high school across the river. Football games between the segregated Black schools of the two cities provided a working definition of the term "mayhem" as the spectators determined the 'real' winner; quite like today's British soccer matches. Who always won the bloody battles? Why, the children of the so-called "Black Underclass" of this crime-ridden sister city across the river from St. Louis—and they had already formed the nucleus of today's more sophisticated gangs and drug networks. And, "Why Johnny Can't Read" could have been written right then and there by that Catholic priest in Chicago.

After World War II a long-term economic decline brought high unemployment and rapid deterioration of the housing stock.

Along with this situation came escalation of 'Black Flight' of professionals and other stable elements of the community to the Missouri side of the river. Like an early, isolationist America which believed that the Atlantic Ocean would isolate them from 'At Risk' European involvements, the St. Louis Black elite believed that the mighty Mississippi River would somehow 'protect' them from their "wrong-doing" brethren. It didn't. There is no so-called 'escape'. We are one people.

In 1948, I visited relatives in Chicago, both in the Altgeld Housing Project, and in a new 'upward mobility', Black-sponsored development near Northwestern University. The same process was in motion. In 1969 I visited the (then) nationally acclaimed 95% Black Windsor Hills Elementary School in Los Angeles. *Parents Magazine* described the miracle: "Out of 400 elementary schools, Black 'Windsor Hills' scores first in MATHEMATICS and second in READING." A very early EXCELLENCE!

What this periodical did not make clear was that these were the children of the town's fastest-growing Black elite; along with the school itself, all were comfortably housed in plush Baldwin Hills of swimming pools and tennis courts. Earlier the school was in the lowest percentile, but upwardly-mobile parents—engineers, scientists, doctors, lawyers and administrators—had stormed the school administration, literally. Winning their battle with lawsuits, injunctions and assaults on both the School Board and the Teacher's Unions, they got rid of incompetent teachers, updated the texts, curriculum, and science equipment. Also bringing in industry, they got EXCELLENCE in a hurry.

I think you know what I'm going to say next. That's right, it all soon deteriorated as the "underclass" invaded. They too wanted Excellence. There is a lesson here for Portland's "upwardly mobile" Blacks. You are AT RISK! Why!

Continued Next Week

Deadlines for all submitted materials:
Articles: Monday, 5 p.m.; Ads: Tuesday, 5 p.m.

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope.

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