

EDITORIAL / OPINION

Strange Silence From Black Elected Officials

The proposed closing of the administrative section at the Albina Human Resource Center on N.E. Union Avenue has provoked protest and outrage from community leaders and city officials, including Portland Mayor Bud Clark.

The State Department of Human Resources claims it can contract out the services now being provided by the administrative staff at the center to non-profit groups at cost savings.

What the department fails to

ices by the agencies housed in the center. The elimination of their section could possibly mean poor people will once again fall through the "cracks" and find themselves at the "mercy" of those less caring.

The D.H.S. proposal would add to the welfare and unemployment plight which would be inclusive of the staff of the administrative staff. This seems hardly consistent with Governor Goldschmidt's economic development plan for N.E. Portland.

COMMENTARY

point out is "their cost savings will come about as a result of eliminating seven positions," including some with at least 17 years of service with the state. Most of the community non-profit groups have rejected the offer, claiming (and rightfully so) that it is impossible to provide the services currently being met by the seven, soon to be jobless employees, at a fraction of the cost.

The department also failed to consider, that after 19 years, the administrative staff of the center provide emergency services for clients that are rejected for serv-

Stranger than fiction has been the apparent lack of interest by Oregon's Black Elected Officials. To date, none has come forth with a word of protest. A community's voice, backed by its elected officials lend credence during a crisis. And, this is truly a crisis. Now is the time to act.

The community is looking for an elected official (Black or white) to step forth and join Mayor Bud Clark in helping to save a much needed resource.

Whom shall be the first to speak out?

Black Against Black Violence

by Dr. Manning Marable

The urban ghettos of America increasingly are becoming armed, military zones. Millions of people live in fear of being raped, robbed or mugged. Thousands of homes are burglarized every week in Black neighborhoods. Hundreds of our young people are being slaughtered in the streets and back alleys. And many of our high schools are now battlegrounds for drug pushers.

Between January and August, 1988, only eight months, 143 people were murdered in Miami, a figure which was higher than the city's total number of murders in 1987. Crime statistics from other cities are equally grim. During the same period in 1988, New Orleans recorded 216 murders; Houston, 411 murders; Washington, D.C., 323 murders; and New York City, 1,231 murders. The vast majority of the victims are nonwhite males. In the United States, a white male has a one-in-186 chance of becoming a murder victim. For all Black men, the odds are one chance in twenty nine. And for those living in Washington, D.C., the South Bronx, Chicago's South Side, or other urban centers, the murder rate odds for Black males probably decline to less than one out of twenty.

Urban violence frequently takes its casualties from the innocent bystanders, those who have no role in drugs, crime or murder. Two weeks before this Christmas, a nine year old boy died in a Chicago public housing project because paramedics refused to enter the apartment building at night. The paramedics later claimed that their ambulance was being hit by rocks and eggs hurled by local residents. The family of the dead boy disputed these charges, and filed a \$60 million suit against the Chicago Fire Department. Whether the paramedics were attacked or not, is secondary to the larger issue of the pervasiveness of urban violence. When postal workers, delivery workers, medics and other healthcare professionals are afraid to enter neighborhoods without police protection, then the quality of life for the population in that area must deteriorate.

Police argue that most of the recent violence is directly attributable to the proliferation of crack. The street trade in crack cocaine is so profitable that many gangs are now as heavily armed as police SWAT teams. Witnesses of drug-related crimes often disappear; the arrests of thousands of young people who are low-level dealers has done little to keep thou-

sands more from taking their places.

The flood of violence, however, can only be understood by going beyond the single issue of drugs. Why does violence become the sole method for resolving conflict between so many young Black men? What is the long-term political and economic impact of violence within the national Black community? People resort to violence in their relations with each other when they devalue the humanity and dignity of those individuals with whom they are in conflict. Disagreements are inevitable within all societies. But when people are routinely shot for less than ten dollars, or a young Black man in Detroit can be murdered on a city bus for no reason, a very disturbing level of human alienation and social decay has been reached.

Black leaders must begin to address, squarely and forthrightly, this crisis of human values within our communities. Many social institutions such as churches and schools no longer exert the moral and social influence among younger Blacks. The economic crisis of poverty and unemployment directly contributes to the violence as well. When people cannot eat or clothe their children, they will steal to survive. When crack dealers pay unemployed teens hundreds of dollars per day, why should they aspire to hold subminimum wage jobs? A person without a job and who has been influenced by the rampant materialism of the dominant culture can be recruited into criminal activity.

The only long term, fundamental solution to the violence between Black people is found within the strategy of community and group empowerment. People who are involved in political change, economic development and community-based reform movements do not destroy each other. They channel their energies into the constructive acts of socio-economic and political change, and their outlook on their friends, peers and neighbors also changes. They seek to build local institutions and to equip others in the tools for political and social involvement, and in doing so, their understanding of interpersonal relations deepens.

If a person hates himself or herself, and has no appreciation for the culture and sacrifices of Black people of previous generations, he or she will act in a criminal manner against other Blacks. To end the violence, we must organize ourselves from within.

Letter To The Editor:

Dear Mr. Henderson,

Thank you very much for putting your editorial opinion in 2-1/8" Columns. It makes everything more readable and faster.

I read your paper regularly and find it helpful and interesting. I'm white. I was elected to the Oregon State Legislature 1963-1975.

Howard D. Willits

GUEST EDITORIAL: Jackson Action: The Inside Strategy

by Ron Daniels

Jesse Jackson has become a formidable fact of life inside the Democratic Party. The liberal progressive Rainbow electoral coalition which he forged in 1988 demonstrated that with the right message, and the strategy the Democratic Party can expand its base and remain a viable force in presidential politics. For the record Jesse Jackson polled nearly 7 million votes in his primary presidential election bid. That's more votes than any runner-up in the history of the Democratic Party. Walter Mondale won the nomination in 1984 with 6.7 million votes. Jesse Jackson won 13 states, 100 congressional districts, and captured more than 1,200 delegates at the Democratic National Convention. Of equal importance Jesse Jackson kept critical issues on the table. These are issues of importance to Black and Third World people--drugs, housing, health care, education, jobs, peace, justice. These historic accomplishments have propelled Jackson into the leadership of the liberal--progressive wing of the Democratic Party.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Jesse Jackson realizes that given the panic which the conservative tide has created among Democrats, the liberal-progressive forces will have to fight hard to keep the Party from stampeding to the right and self-destructing. He has issued a major challenge to his supporters to PARTICIPATE in and TRANSFORM the Democratic Party from the precinct to the presidency. The fact is Black people have yet to really master and fully exploit the benefits of "traditional" electoral politics. African-Americans need to press the two traditional parties to produce every gain and benefit possible in the interest of the masses of Black people, other minorities, poor working people, and the struggling middle class.

Though the vast majority of Black people vote Democratic, we are really not in the Democratic Party. Black people seldom seek positions on the policy making bodies within the Party at the state, local and national levels. And when we have gained access to these policy-making bodies we have often been guilty of not knowing the rules, or worse yet, failing to attend the meetings on a regular basis. Black people vote Democratic and then leave the business of setting rules, and establishing the policies by which the Party will function to someone else. No one else will project and defend your interest like you. Jesse Jackson therefore is challenging Black people and progressives who vote Democratic to fight for full representation and an equitable share of EVERYTHING within the Democratic Party.

If the truth be told African-Americans have never really systematically fought to make the Democratic Party responsive and accountable to Black people at all levels. The time has come to take our vote and participation seriously or to stop complaining about others taking advantage of us.

The Black vote must be used around a progressive agenda for change and benefit for the masses of Black people, minorities, poor and working people. In that regard we must fearlessly reward our friends and punish our enemies (elect and de-elect). Understanding this Jesse Jackson continues to place a premium on voter registration. Of the 7 million votes which Jackson won in 1988, about 4-1/2 million were Black votes. But guess what, there were 14 million Black registered voters eligible and available to vote in 1988 and another 7-8 million Blacks unregistered. Remember Mondale won the Democratic nomination in 1984 with 6.7 million votes and Dukakis won in 1988 with about 9 million votes. THE BLACK VOTE POTENTIAL IS 22 MILLION VOTES!

The Jackson Action Agenda inside the Democratic party calls for a major effort to liberalize voter registration laws to make it easier for potential voters to register and remain on the books. The Conyer's Bill which promotes same day, same site election day registration is the center piece of the Jackson registration program. Other components of the Jackson agenda include D.C. Statehood, minority and women set aside programs for business and support for the Dellums' Bill for tougher sanctions against South Africa. Needless to say expanded aid for housing, health care, education, jobs, and a sane foreign policy will continue to be integral to Jackson's efforts to restore sanity to the Democratic Party.

That's essentially the strategy which Jesse Jackson will be harnessing his supporters to fight for inside the Democratic party. The next four years with critical mayoral and gubernatorial elections in 1989, the census in 1990, re-apportionment in 1991 and presidential elections again in 1992 will provide ample time to test the possibilities of the inside strategy. Meanwhile, those who would seek to deny Jesse Jackson his just due as the leader of the liberal progressive wing of the Party need to re-think their position. Another debacle like 1988 and even Jesse Jackson will not be able to stem the flood of disaffection and defections from the Democratic Party. INDEED WHAT AFRICAN-AMERICANS AND THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT REALLY NEED IS AN INSIDE-OUTSIDE STRATEGY.

1988 Year Of Drift: Dodges And Little Change

1988 was a year was a year dominated by politics.

It saw the rise of a serious black presidential candidate, and the election of a new president who appears capable of breaking with at least some of the mistaken directions of the past eight years.

Conventional wisdom says the 1988 election proved the political powerlessness of blacks. But, as is often the case, conventional wisdom is wrong.

The black vote makes its maximum impact in close elections, but the 1988 presidential campaign wasn't close. Blacks gave over 86 percent of their votes to the loser--not out of enthusiasm for him, but against a candidate who served the current Administration.

On the state and local level however, the black vote did have an impact on several important races. Black votes, for example, provided the margin of victory for Senator Lautenberg of New Jersey over his popular Republican rival.

And the number of blacks in Congress increased to 23, with the addition of Donald Payne, who carried

New Jersey's 10th Congressional District.

The justified pride in his election as the state's first black congressman should, however, be joined by heartfelt gratitude for his retiring predecessor, Peter Rodino, who was a stalwart champion of civil rights and who did so much to assure passage of key civil rights laws.

Conventional wisdom also says whites won't vote for black candidates, but Jesse Jackson garnered white votes in his primary campaigns, and Mississippi Congressman Mike Espy won re-election with 40 percent of the white vote.

But politics wasn't all there was to 1988. A small step forward was made by passage of the Civil Rights Restoration Act, which closes a glaring loophole that allowed discrimination. And another loophole was plugged when Congress passed amendments to the Fair Housing Act that for the first time, endows authorities with enforcement powers.

That such action was needed is demonstrated by a University of Chicago study released in November, which concluded: "blacks remain highly

segregated no matter where they live in metropolitan areas." The study highlighted continued segregation in suburban housing.

The one major change in social policies--a new welfare law--fell far short of the necessary overhaul of the welfare system. The income gap between blacks and whites remains--

with typical black income frozen at about 56 percent of white income. And for all the publicity about school reforms, most experts agreed that reform was bypassing the inner-city schools that need it most.

So 1988 was a year of business as usual, a year that started with high hopes and finished with little real change.



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