

EDITORIAL / OPINION

Perspectives



The Rocks Cried Out, No Hiding Place

by Professor McKinley Burt

That is what the Black poet said about his trip "down to the river to 'hide my face.'" And, indeed, there is no place to hide our faces from the pressing need to redouble the effort to secure a proper representation of our youth in Oregon's system of higher education.

While the advantages of the 'Black College' were recognized last week, it was also put, on balance, that the prerequisite for maintaining and building a more viable Black community depends upon retaining and educating a sizeable cadre of talented youth at home. Given the present circumstances of Black education in the state--from K1 to graduate programs--there can be no underestimation of the resolve, resources and energies needed to bring about change. A good question, of course, is **Where do you start?**, since, as described above, the system is vertical and has traumas all along the line feeding into higher education.

Let me cite that old adage, "Let down your bucket where you are." If you are already involved, redouble your efforts, and if not change your ways--the next victims of the system may be your next burglars, or the new pushers on the block. I make no claim for the immediate creation of a "Higher Education Task Force." That may be alright down the line but would require careful structuring. I have had occasional bad experience with **band wagon** Blacks who seek only media attention, or with those whose contributions are stifled because they are **establishment-owned**, dispatched into the fray as **gate keepers**. The following is typical of problems faced by Black students of Oregon's institutions of higher learning. The traumatic experience of Ms. Tay Johnson, a 1986 graduate of Oregon State University: Earning a degree in Business and Computer Science, she was notified two days before leaving campus that she lacked a key credit for graduation--not true of course, this was a reprisal for

frequent visits by her parents to protest racism and harassment; on the very first day of a calculus class she was told "no way you can expect an A in here." Signs tacked on door of dormitory room, "Nigger go home." There was an attempt to run down both Miss Johnson and another Black coed with a pickup truck by two cursing white males.

This is where the community needs to come into play for repeated appeals to the dormitory matron and the **President of the University** were to little avail. These events may be cited as not unusual, though at those institutions. Where they do not frequently occur, we find a no-nonsense university president--we have stated before that there has to be **commitment at the top**, citing both academia and affirmative action. The Black personnel at these schools may be under various forms of discrimination or duress themselves, whether in teaching or support areas, so it is always problematical that issues are being addressed.

Additionally, there are compelling issues of an urgency that applies to both Black and white students. Writer Elizabeth Wallace put them very well in the Oregonian's Forum section, Sunday, October 29. Among other things, "Students need recommendations for jobs and graduate schools from faculty who know their work well. Turnover of part-time instructors is high." There are many other across-the-board disabilities of the system which require the intervention of that "skilled and advantaged" segment I have mentioned.

A vivid recital of racist scenarios can be abstracted from my 12 years of faculty experience at Portland State University. Not so much that these confrontations were distinctly different from events occurring at other institutions, but that the recitation is of personal involvement, not hearsay. Next week I'll detail how faculty prejudice and games can destroy a student, and how these attitudes can spill over into areas that are nonacademic but nevertheless crucial to a student's performance. Unbelievable? Believe me!

Vantage Point

Power For The Black Majority Is The Goal In South Africa



by Ron Daniels

The noted African-American abolitionist and freedom fighter Frederick Douglass once warned that "power concedes nothing without demand, it never has and it never will." Throughout the southern Africa region power is yielding before the onslaught of determined demand. As the struggle for liberation reaches its climatic phase, it may be useful to remind ourselves that the real goal in the region is power, and the ability to control land and resources in the interest of the people. In South Africa in particular, the fight is not for integration, but for Black Power (Black majority rule). This is what the illegal regime in South Africa fears most, and has fought fiercely to prevent throughout the region. The final countdown on this heinous regime, however, is clearly underway.

The winds of change are blowing briskly throughout the southern Africa region. Angolan troops backed by their Cuban allies battered South African forces and blunted their incursion into sovereign Angolan territory in the battle of Cuitoquanaale. The defeated South African troops withdrew and South Africa sued for peace. Recently the world witnessed the historic picture of Sam Nujoma, President of the South West African People's Organization (S.W.A.P.O.), kissing the ground of his native land upon his return to Namibia after thirty years in exile. The liberation struggle has produced a victory which has paved the way for free elections; elections which S.W.A.P.O. is expected to win. With S.W.A.P.O.'s ascension to power, the people will be able to control their own destiny. The illegal racist minority regime in South Africa has suffered yet another defeat, and now is compelled to retreat to the confines of South Africa itself where it must face the stark reality of the growing demand for Black majority rule. South Africa is increasingly isolated.

The massive unending struggle by liberation forces inside South Africa, the tightening vise of worldwide economic sanctions, and the pervasive pressure of unfavorable world public opinion is forcing change in South Africa--the last bastion of white supremacist ideology and rule on the African continent. Despite the regime's boast to the contrary, sanctions have had a telling effect as has the constant instability caused by strikes, mass protests, boycotts and armed struggle. The "outlawed" African National Congress will not die. In the face of the regime's awesome military arsenal, against incredible odds, the power of the people is prevailing.

It is necessary to caution, however,

that power seeks to preserve itself at all costs. And so it will be will the regime in South Africa. Having failed to brutalize the people into submission through the rein of terror unleashed under the state of emergency, the regime will next seek to empty co-optation, and divide and conquer strategies to achieve an accommodation which is most favorable to its own interest. That interest is plain and simple - to maintain maximum control over the gold, diamonds, uranium, copper, platinum, nickel, chrome, tungsten - the land, resources, and wealth. The regimes first ploy will be to make a few superfluous changes in order to preserve this vital interest.

Hence the barriers of apartheid or segregation are already being gradually removed. Total integration is likely to be a reality in the not too distant future, as the minority regime seeks to pacify the Black majority by wiping out the laws which have heaped indignities on Black people for decades in their own land. Even inter-racial dating and marriage, the most dread images of social relations from the perspective of the segregationists, will soon come to be tolerated.

What will be viewed as intolerable and unacceptable is integration into real political and economic power. The regime will try virtually anything to cling to power.

The recent release of Walter Sisulu and seven other political prisoners was timed to forestall a further call for sanctions within the British Commonwealth. It is no secret that the "liberal" new President F.W. de Klerk and others within the regime also hoped that the release of the political prisoners would create a split within A.N.C. between the older leaders, and the leadership which has emerged during the long period of imprisonment of Mandela and Sisulu. However, Walter Sisulu was quick to dash these hopes by declaring that there would be only one A.N.C. Sisulu also issued a call for a united front among all elements of the liberation movement in South Africa - bad news for a regime hoping to cling to power. This desperate effort to retain power is bound to continue. There is simply too much wealth at stake for the privileged minority.

In this final dangerous phase of the liberation struggle in South Africa, neither the A.N.C. or its many friends, allies and supporters abroad can afford to be co-opted or lulled to sleep by the cosmetic changes that will be offered up to appease the Black majority in South Africa. On the contrary inside South Africa and throughout the world the political and economic pressure must be intensified. In the United States the free South Africa movement must increase the pressure for black majority rule, thereby strengthening the hand of A.N.C. and the liberation forces inside South Africa. Progressives and freedom fighters everywhere must keep their eyes on the real prize - POWER for the Black majority in South Africa!

This Way for Black Empowerment

A New Black Agenda For A New Generation

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

Recently the Black Student Union at the State University of New York in New Paltz invited me to be the "Speaker of the Month." It always gives me enormous pleasure to speak to young people because, unlike many of their elders, they have not yet learned to be cynical.

Our young men and women represent a new generation of Black voters, who stand on the brink not only of a new decade but of a new political era. And for that, a new Black Agenda is called for.

It's not that all of the old problems have been solved -- far from it. The cancer of apartheid still eats away at the bodies and souls of our African sisters and brothers. Here in the United States police brutality, poverty and racism are still very much with us. A recent government report says that although the health of the overall American population is improving, there is a continuing disparity in the death and illness rates of Blacks and whites: in 1987 life expectancy for white Americans was 75.6 years, 69.4 years for Blacks; being Black and poor in white America still kills us way before time.

But we are in a new phase of the struggle, the struggle for economic democracy, and for that we need new tactics -- new weapons. The old tactics aren't adequate because they don't take into account everything that's happened since they were first devised. I am talking about the enactment during the '60s of civil rights legislation that we paid for in blood . . . and the fact that today, a generation later, although we have finally won the legal right to vote, the masses of our people still do not feel they have a reason to go to the polls.

I am talking about the fact that 17 years after the 1972 National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana -- which rejected the option of building an independent Black party in favor of a strategy that focused on increasing the number of Black elected officials, mainly through the Democratic Party -- we have seen their number increase by 365%, yet the masses of our people have little to show for that "success."

I am talking about Reverend Jesse Jackson's historic Presidential campaigns 1984 and 1988, which galvanized the Black community and our allies among other people of color and progressive whites -- and showed us (on national

television) that the Democratic Party leadership would continue to insult our leaders, reject our Agenda, and exclude our people while taking our votes for granted.

Internationally, we are witnessing a new "rapprochement," or coming together, between the United States, the Soviet Union and China similar to the "unity" that the establishment African-American leadership has arranged with the Democratic Party. Yet these arrangements exclude the masses of the world's people, who do not benefit economically, politically, culturally or in any other way from the deals that are being cut -- supposedly in our name.

What about the 30 million Zairians, for example -- whose children are dying of hunger while their self-appointed president for life, a multi-billionaire named Mobutu Sese Seko, is being promoted by the Bush administration (and some Black Democrats, most notably California Congressman Mervyn Dymally) as the "statesman" responsible for negotiating the peace accords (which are already collapsing) between the popularly elected government of Angola and the South African/CIA-subsidized UNITA terrorists led by Jonas Savimbi?

Zaire is at the top of the new Black Agenda. It is inseparable from the fight for fair elections in this country. Because unless the political process is opened up to new voices and new views -- the voices the views of the left out, the disenfranchised, the disinherited -- the professional politicians of the major parties will continue to monopolize the political dialogue. And that means only the "old" problems, with their "old" solutions, will be allowed a hearing: South Africa, yes; Zaire, no. Democratic Party politics, yes; independent politics, no.

I believe that only an independent, Black-led and multi-racial political party committed to people instead of profits can open up and democratize that political process . . . the major parties, committed as they are to perpetuating the right of white corporate America to make a profit by any means, are far more concerned with closing down the dialogue.

Zaire, fair elections, the struggle for economic democracy -- these are the issues for the new Black Agenda that our new generation confronts. The young people that I am speaking to are down. Are you?

Civil Rights Journal

Immigration In Los Angeles

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Now that a new Commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has finally been confirmed, it is hoped that the cries of thousands of persons seeking immigration or an adjustment in their INS status will receive timely and fair responses. There have been many allegations concerning racism and discrimination involving the process of immigration to the United States, particularly for those persons from Latin American, African and other nations from the developing world. In addition, there has been gross discrimination aimed particularly at undocumented workers who labor throughout the nation under often difficult and inhuman standards.

The news from the city of Los Angeles concerning current U.S. Immigration laws and the plight of undocumented workers sheds a ray of hope for thousands. Los Angeles has taken the lead on this issue by establishing a formal program to help find jobs for day laborers, most of whom are undocumented workers whom the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service would like to deport. Most of the workers in this pilot program are Hispanic.

Having a job is critical to making it in this society. Despite the myth of laziness of the immigrant community, thousands of persons come to the United States not to steal, not to loathe, but to make an honest day's work and to make a contribution to society. The whole concept of "illegal aliens" has been used to systematically discriminate against certain immigrants, again particularly those immigrants who are non-European racial and ethnic.

According to the New York Times the city of Los Angeles plan to facilitate

the finding of jobs for day laborers "is technically legal despite its clear challenge to the 1986 Immigration Law, under which it is illegal to hire illegal aliens." In many cities the INS has carried out raids on sites where day laborers gather. To be sure, the present policies and laws on immigration need to be made more humane as well as the enforcement of present immigration restrictions needs to be done even handedly and fairly without racial discrimination.

Many cities particularly in Texas, Illinois, Florida, New York and in California will be monitoring the Los Angeles experiment. The success of this project may provide a unique bridge to change some of the other discriminatory practices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

We agree with many immigration rights organizations that all laborers in this nation should be treated with dignity and respect. We caution the INS not to attack the outreach of the city of Los Angeles to members of its community who simply want to work and have decent living conditions. We agree with the Coalition for Humane Immigration Rights based in Los Angeles as they have challenged the hypocrisy and racism of current U.S. immigration procedures. Ms. Linda Mitchell of the Coalition has stated, "you can either hunt them down or you can integrate them into your community . . . if you deny them health care, schooling and the right to work, you will just further impoverish them."

Now is the time for all Americans to work harder to make this society not a place divided by racist stereotypes and institutionalized alienation but a place where we all can work together and live together to improve the lot of all humanity.

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New Group Forms To Fight Legal Drugging

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights of Oregon recently established a new Chapter North Portland. The North Portland Chapter will fight Ritalin and other psychiatric drug abuses in that area. "There has been a tremendous outcry over the street drug problems in our area, but what so many people don't realize is that many of today's psychiatric drugs are very addictive and in many cases do not help the individual." Dana Popick the North Portland Director claimed. Jessica Allen, Assistant Director stated, "The Black Community as well as elderly and low income families are very often hit hard by this particular psychiatric abuse because government funding has made psychiatric programs readily available, the most common treatment of mental ailments today is drugs first, discussion later or never. On a Statewide level, the largest number of psychiatric abuses comes from these areas."

The 1989-90 Oregon Media Guide is now available. The media guide lists newspapers and publications, radio, cable and television stations that accept news, articles and public service announcements. Could you see some free publicity for your agency or event? Indexes help you target areas of special interest. A "How-To" section will help you get started. Contact the Center for Urban Education, at 223-3444 to order your Oregon Media Guide.

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