

EDITORIAL / OPINION

Perspectives



by Professor McKinley Burt

Education Needs Structure -- Not Lotteries

by Professor McKinley Burt

In this continuing saga of the higher education soap opera it is not only necessary to cite the direct and the overt discrimination of last week's article, but it is equally appropriate to list the structural disabilities which mitigate against minorities and poorer whites in the system. Economics are a priority consideration for the student planning a college education and it is a given that most will have to work to supplement a diminishing availability of grants and loans. This means that they have no choice but to attend colleges located within a major metropolitan area where minorities have a thousand times better chance of becoming a member of the work force--as compared with the racist atmospheres of Salem (Oregon State Univ.), or Eugene (Univ. of Oregon). This is why I have been so disturbed by the media reports that Oregon's high tech industry is advocating a shut-down of Portland State University.

In my years on the faculty of Portland State I spent many hundreds of hours interacting with industry and public agencies in order to secure jobs for my students. Many of the situations created not only financial assistance but academic credit where real skills were developed within their discipline; hundreds of thousands of dollars in resources were developed through the auspices of the U.S. Forest Service and the very progressive United Parcel Service. I hope that there is an individual or a service there at the school that is still providing this much needed support.

I am still not disabused of the notion that what these hi-tech companies intend is a rip off of the taxpayer not too think these firms, instead, would be about a real unity with the education community and state government in order to effect a campaign similar to that of

North Carolina in the 1970s; There, a dynamic, go-getter of a governor turned the economic fortunes of the entire state around by forging a hard-working coalition of educators, industrialists, bankers, unions, and politicians whose efforts brought hundreds of million in new payrolls to the state within a few short years.

These people used their brains and the natural assets of their state (material and human) to build and attract hundreds of new plants and a first class high technology learning center. What they did not do was set up a lottery scheme which would have acted as a regressive tax upon the poor, and though purporting to be directed at Economic Development, would have amassed a treasury of bureaucrats and hustlers. (sound familiar?)

Now, it is true that in August of 1988 Bill McKenzie of the Oregonian's staff described a somewhat tentative Science Council recently established by Governor Neil Goldschmidt. Among proposed goals were "obtaining science grants, applied technology institutes, improvement of science and math education, innovation awards, science faculty recruitment and so forth. Somewhat murky and we do not know at all where it will lead or if it portends any improvement in the equally as murky situation facing Blacks either economically or in terms of college aspirations. The North Carolina Model I described may never come to be here so I suggest that its going to be up to Black parents, grandparents and organizations to secure the type of education for our children that will enable them to survive--I mean secure it right here!

Perhaps an increasing awareness of this problem will make for some structured efforts toward improvements. On Nov. 5-7 there was a special conference on these issues convened by the American Council on Education and other higher education groups in San Francisco ("Educating One-Third of a Nation: What Works?"). The many seminars address the disabilities I have cited here the past few weeks, and certainly, I would have cited here the past few weeks, and certainly, I would like to have attended one in particular, "Campus Climate." There is hope but, again, it will take all of us.

VANTAGE POINT

by Ron Daniels

Bush Insults Ortega, US Intrudes In Nicaragua

Uncle Sam is at it again. At a recent hemispheric gathering celebrating the history of democracy in Costa Rica, President George Bush branded President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua a "little man" and an "animal" at a garden party. This pungent reaction from the U.S. President came in response to an announcement that the Nicaragua government might be forced to abandon the 19 month old cease-fire because of chronic violations of the cease-fire by the U.S. backed Contras.

President Bush was quick to condemn Ortega for his threat to cancel the cease-fire. Those who are anxious to curry favor with or otherwise stay in the good graces of their powerful northern neighbor immediately followed suit. Lost in the flurry of condemnations was any serious attempt to evaluate the veracity of President Ortega's claim that hundreds of violations of the cease fire by the Contras had resulted in more than 700 deaths and nearly 1,200 wounded. To be sure Ortega's timing may have been awkward and somewhat undiplomatic by conventional standards. But who is to say when and in what form a beleaguered people/nation should cry out in anguish?

In fact the real violation of international etiquette has been the U.S. intrusion into the internal affairs of Nicaragua. After nearly 30 years of backing the despotism of the Somoza family, the United States sought to dictate to the Sandinista regime what the nature of its newly won revolution should be. Instead of providing massive economic aid and technical assistance to help the Sandinistas fulfill the promise of their revolution, Ronald Reagan chose to throw down the gauntlet to stop the "spread of communism." The U.S. created the Contras, financed them and unleashed them to prosecute Reagan's war of "national liberation."

The impact of Reagan's war on the sovereign nation of Nicaragua was predictable. Instead of investing resources into bettering the life of the people in terms of improving the economy, creating jobs, building housing etc. resources were diverted into a military build-up to defend the very existence of the revolution itself against the onslaught of Reagan's warriors. Despite the staggering difficulties posed by the war, however, the Sandinistas still managed to make some impressive gains in literacy, education and health care.

Unfortunately the tremendous drain of resources and drag on the economy caused by Reagan's war has made it virtually impossible for the Sandinistas government to keep

pace with the rising expectations sparked by the revolution. Though the revolution rid the nation of the hated Somoza, Reagan's war coupled with some initial errors by the Sandinistas themselves has left the Nicaraguan economy in shambles. This is precisely the outcome Reagan and Bush had hoped for. The Sandinistas are weakened and vulnerable.

It is against this backdrop that "free" elections are scheduled to take place in February. However, these elections will not be "free" of U.S. intrusion and interference. The rampant destabilizing attacks of the U.S. backed Contras over the duration of the cease-fire already constitute a U.S. encroachment by proxy into the affairs of Nicaragua. A firm hand from lean, tall George could have reined in the Contras at anytime during the last several months. It is clear that Bush and Co. are dedicated to the demise of the "little man" from Managua at all costs.

It is for that reason that Bush is not taking any chances. The U.S. is planning to pour 9 million dollars into Nicaragua under the guise of assisting the election process. The real intent is to defeat the Sandinistas. This fact was betrayed when some officials within the administration first proposed funding the Nicaragua opposition directly. Apparently this upfront approach was just a bit too raw for even George Bush to stomach. So instead monies will be funneled into "neutral" agencies to undertake a variety of "services" including a massive door to door canvass to insure that every eligible Nicaraguan citizen is registered to vote in the February election. It is ironic that millions of dollars can be spent in Nicaragua to do registration, while legislation to remove cumbersome barriers to registration within the United States is currently stalled in Congress.

Nonetheless, the U.S. can "sponsor" democracy in Nicaragua. Can you imagine another nation contemplating funding a political party in America? It is unthinkable, unconscionable and it would not be tolerated. But this is precisely what is happening in Nicaragua. First a U.S. sponsored war, then a cease fire violated by Reagan's warriors and now outright interference in the election process of another sovereign nation. If that's not arrogance of power, I don't know what is. But this is the kind of intrusion into other peoples affairs that goes on when U.S. presidents, policy makers and a sizeable segment of people within this country perceive people of color and leaders of developing nations as little boys and girls and "animals."

Along The Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

"America's Military Iron Curtain"

The Cold War in Europe is at long last ending. The Iron Curtain dividing Communist Eastern Europe from the capitalist west has been breached, and entirely destroyed in Hungary. This year alone, we have witnessed the election of a non-Communist government in Poland, political liberalization in Hungary, the creation of a democratic legislature in the Soviet Union, and the destruction of the Berlin Wall.

The political leader chiefly responsible for the trend toward world peace is not President Bush, but Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. It is Gorbachev who has set the pace for the radical restructuring of his own economic and political system, and has encouraged pluralism and democracy in Eastern Europe. The Soviets are unilaterally withdrawing 50,000 troops and 5,000 tanks from Europe, and are prepared to make even deeper cuts in conventional and nuclear forces. The Soviets have agreed to disband the Warsaw Pact if the U.S. and its allies also agree to dissolve the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But the Bush administration has yet to respond to these initiatives. The U.S. still has over 300,000 army and air force troops stationed in Europe, and the Bush administration has rejected talks to eliminate the Warsaw Pact or NATO. America's leadership is missing a once-in-a-century opportunity to achieve a permanent peace.

Last month, the House of Representatives voted to approve the largest bill for nuclear and conventional weapons expenditures in U.S. history--\$305 billion. There were virtually no debate or discussion, and the bipartisan vote was 236 to 172. The Senate is expected to approve the bill.

In some respects, this most recent legislation for militarism was even more conservative and reactionary than the legislation sought by Bush. For example, Bush had previously agreed to terminate ten weapons programs over the next two years. The administration had agreed to end construction on new F-14 fighters built by the Grumman Corporation. But the House continued the program, calling for the construction of 18 additional F-14 planes that the Pentagon had not requested. Each F-14 cost \$66 million.

The Pentagon agreed to terminate the V-22 Osprey airplane program; but the House authorized continued production at 585 million. The Bush administration sought to cut a helicopter program, but Congress asked for 36 more helicopters at \$195 million. This is not to suggest that Bush has become a "dove" on defense. The Pentagon wanted 44.7 billion for the B-2 Stealth bomber; Congress responded with a paucity \$4.3 billion.

Why are Congress and the President proposing billions of dollars for militarism? The merchants of death, the large military contractors, spend millions every year in political action committees to influence the votes of our Congressional representatives.

Because we exercise the vote, we have the illusion that our interests genuinely matter. But the corporate special interests coopt Democrats and Republicans alike, by providing generous election financing in return for the continuation of wasteful, destructive military programs.

What's the price of this Cold War budget? In the next five years, Congress is projected to allocate nearly \$1.6 trillion for weapons. These billions are taken from human needs and economic development. Two Trident submarines cost \$2.3 billion from food stamps, plus another \$700 million from nutritional aid to women, infants and children. Forty six M-1 tanks would purchase 500 modern city buses for mass transportation. One F-16 jet fighter costs as much as one thousand teachers' salaries for one full year. One billion dollars spend on building guided missiles creates 20,700 jobs--but one billion dollars spent for public health care facilities, doctors, nurses and staff would create 54,300 jobs. One billion dollars spent for public education, teachers' salaries and school construction would generate 71,500 jobs.

Its a question of public need vs. corporate greed. The real wages of American middle income workers, adjusted for inflation, have actually fallen 9 percent since the election of Reagan in 1980. Nearly two thousand teenagers drop out of American high schools every day. Drugs are destroying our urban and suburban neighborhoods. Two million Americans sleep in alleys, abandoned automobiles and gutters every night. Thirty seven million have absolutely no type of health insurance coverage. Yet Pentagon expenditures have soared 250 percent since the administration of Jimmy Carter. Both parties are guilty of criminal neglect of the real interests of the American people.

The democratic developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe indicate that the so-called Iron Curtain no longer separates east from west. The real Iron Curtain is the barrier between the interests of the American people and the prerogatives of the military, corporate and political elites which want to perpetuate militarism and the politics of the Cold War. The Berlin Wall no longer divides east and west; the real wall is the barrier which divides the majority of American working people, African-Americans, Latinos, the unemployed, the poor and women from the reality of full employment, adequate health care, decent public housing, and quality education, due to military spending.

The Cold War in Europe is collapsing, but Congress and the Bush administration must be challenged to imitate Gorbachev's perestroika. We need a war for social and economic justice in this country--a war for full employment, a war to reconstruct our cities and to end the plague of drugs, a war against racism, and a war for real democracy.

WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

Political Science Lesson

On election day more than 11,000 Black and Puerto Rican working class people in the 11th Councilmanic District of New York City's South Bronx rose up against the Democratic Party to vote independent. An incredible 42% of the electorate took the opportunity to "jump" from the Democrats' Column A, where they pulled the lever for David Dinkins, to Column F so they could vote for Pedro Espada, a grassroots Puerto Rican leader and insurgent Democrat who ran on the independent New Alliance Party line to challenge the notoriously corrupt and right wing incumbent. Forty-two percent! It is almost certainly the highest vote percentage for an independent candidate in any jurisdiction in the country.

There is an important lesson to learn from the difference between Espada's "losing" 42% and mayor-elect Dinkins' winning 51%.

Dinkins, a moderate Democrat, won the Sept. 13 primary on the wave of militant Black protest against the murder of Yusuf Hawkins by a Bensonhurst lynch mob last August--the most recent in succession of racist murders that has brought tens of thousands of working class Black people--many of them very young--into the streets of New York. It was this Black upsurge in the streets that fueled the finally successful drive to dump the racist bully Ed Koch, who was looking for an unprecedented fourth term as mayor.

But Dinkins, having benefited from the outpouring of militant Black rage, was terrified of being associated with it. Projecting himself as the political figure who could "unify" a racially polarized city, he bragged of having publicly denounced Minister Louis Farrakhan when he spoke at Madison Square Gardens in 1985, openly pandering to the most racist elements in the Jewish and conservative white communities. He repudiated the 25,000 signatures gathered by the New Alliance Party to put him on the ballot in the general elections, and--once he had the Democratic Party nomination in his pocket--even kept Jesse Jackson at a discreet distance from his campaign and from New York.

What it got him was a bare 51% of the vote, to 48% for his Republican opponent, a right wing cop. Ironically, Dinkins' victory has only served to expose the enormous gulf that divides Black (and other people of color) from whites in New York. In a city where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans five to one, Dinkins just about kept his head above water. Conventional (neo-conservative) Democratic Party wisdom notwithstanding, it was Dinkins' distance from (not his connection to) working class Black outrage that just missed handing the election to the vicious Giuliani.

In the South Bronx, another fact of political science was being established--the Black and Puerto Rican working class would vote for the candidate of a Black-led, multi-racial, pro-gay, pro-socialist party... EVEN IF he was the underdog, EVEN IF they had voted Democrat all of their lives. Black and Puerto Rican working class voters would stand up to a reactionary IF they were given the means to do so. NAP was the means.

The Espada results are very, very thrilling. And if NAP can do that outside the

Democratic Party, imagine what we can do from the inside; Challenging hacks and crooks in the primary as independent Democrats! I have no doubt that New York's Democratic Party leaders weren't just celebrating David Dinkins' victory on election night: 1990, when New Yorkers elect a new governor, is a ballot status year in the state: an independent party must get 50,000 votes for its gubernatorial candidate to qualify for permanent ballot status. Now the Democrats know that we know how to count! And they know, too! They're scared to death of NAP... and rightly so.

The Espada vote is proof that the Black-led, multi-racial, "people instead of profits" independent NAP, joining forces with a progressive, grassroots leader who is known and respected in the community--perhaps, like Pedro Espada, a reform Democrat--has the know-how, the organizational capacity and the support to go up against an entrenched, rich and ruthless local Democratic Party machine and comes within fighting distance of victory. The message of that vote will be heard around the country, where many more "Pedro Espadas" are waiting in the wings for the chance to run winning races for city, county, and state office.

We are going to begin the process of identifying electoral jurisdictions where we can have an impact. We're looking for leaders like Pedro Espada, progressive local leaders with name recognition in their communities who are ready, willing and able to "fight the power." NAP is their weapon, a political tool specifically designed for that purpose. We don't have the money, or the patronage to hand out, that the Democratic Party relies on. But the Espada campaign proved that money and patronage are not the only way.

Creed Of The Black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from social and national antagonisms when it accords to every person, regardless of race, color, or creed, full human and legal rights. Hating no person, fearing no person, the Black Press strives to help every person in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

Congressman Denny Smith Tries To Abolish Civil Rights Commission

WASHINGTON--Congressman Denny Smith, R-OR, refused to protect the rights of minorities when he voted against funding for the Civil Rights Commission yesterday. Current funding for the commission expires on Nov. 30, 1989.

"It was Congress Smith's responsibility to stand-up for civil rights and speak-Our for those minorities struggling for equality," said Congressman Beryl Anthony, Jr., D-AR chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "When he cast his vote against funding he was saying in essence that not everyone is truly equal under the law."

Despite Congressman Smith's vote, this bill passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 278 to 135 on Nov. 15. The bill extends funding for the commission through May of 1990. Every major civil rights group in the country supported this bill.

"This was a simple vote on whether or not to continue funding the CFivil Rights Commission," Anthony said. "Surely Congressman Smith's constituents must be disappointed in his actions today. They deserve to be represented by someone who will work to protect civil rights, not endange those rights."

PORTLAND OBSERVER
OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN-AMERICAN PUBLICATION
Established in 1970

Alfred L. Henderson/Publisher Leon Harris/General Manager

Gary Ann Garnett
Business Manager

Joyce Washington
Sales/Marketing Director

PORTLAND OBSERVER
is published weekly by
Esle Publishing Company, Inc.
4747 N.E. M.L.K., Blvd.
Portland, Oregon 97211
P.O. Box 3137
Portland, Oregon 97208

(503) 288-0033 (Office)
Deadlines for all submitted materials:
Articles: Monday, 5 p.m.; Ads: Tuesday, 5 p.m.

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Subscriptions: \$20.00 per year in the Tri-County area.

The PORTLAND OBSERVER -- Oregon's oldest African American Publication--is a member of The National Newspaper Association -- Founded in 1885, The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York.

