



# EDITORIAL / OPINION



## Civil Rights Journal

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.



## To Be Equal

by John E. Jacob

## Perspectives

### Sign Of The Times

### Stand With Native Americans

For too long the aspirations and the well-being of Native Americans have been trampled upon by the forces of power in this society. The spring of 1990 finds the stage once again set for a racial crisis revolving around the treaty rights of Native Americans, in particular in the State of Wisconsin. African Americans as well as all other racial and ethnic persons and person of conscience in the United States should stand in resolute solidarity with our Native American sisters and brothers.

The fishing rights of Native Americans should not be seen as some minor or side issue. Native Americans more than any other community in the nation have contributed to our understanding of how important it is to maintain the proper care for the earth and the environment. Beyond that, the centuries of oppression of Native Americans now demand that all Americans be committed to eliminating the external forces that continue to cause Native Americans to suffer.

The New York Times characterizes the situation in Wisconsin as "Indians' rights vs. whites fears of overfishing." yet this is an over-simplification of the issue. First, the United States government signed treaties with the Chippewa Nation in Wisconsin as far back as 1836. These treaties gave the Chippewa Nation as well as other Native American nations full rights and access to specific fishing and hunting areas in northern Wisconsin.

We now know that this region, like so many of the other Native Americans lands throughout the United States, contains enormous deposits of copper, gold, silver, uranium and other precious minerals. We have found that a lot of the racial animosity directed against Native Americans is being fueled by large multi-national businesses that want greater access and control of these lands and minerals. In Wisconsin, companies such as Kennecott Copper, Union Carbide, Kerr-McGee, Western Nuclear, and Exxon now all have extensive mining interests.

The situation in Wisconsin has also been made worse by the gathering of right-wing, white supremacist groups to intimidate native Americans with threats and acts of racial violence. Thus, the issue in Wisconsin is more than an issue of who can fish and how much fish can be caught. The slogan "Speak an Indian, Save a Fish" is part of a well planned, funded and coordinated racist

campaign to drive Native Americans from their homeland. This cannot be tolerated.

As the United States increasingly evolves into a multi-racial society, the rights and aspirations of Native Americans cannot and should not be forgotten. The treatment of Native Americans currently defines any sense of this society being truly democratic and just. While other parts of the global community appear to be attempting to address multi-ethnic and multi-racial diversity, the United States needs to clean up its act, in particular for Native Americans.

**"The issue in Wisconsin is more than . . . who can fish and how much can be caught."**

We stand in opposition to national media programs like the Morton Downy Show which attempts to trivialize and joke about this serious matter. Downy had dressed himself in an "Indian costume" and had a fake arrow through his leg as he interviewed on television representatives of anti-Native American groups from Wisconsin. This kind of media generated racism only adds fuel to the fire.

We take note that the Wisconsin Conference of Churches has issued an urgent plea for peace concerning the controversy over Native American treaty and fishing rights. We support this plea for peace. Yet it has been our experience that peace without justice is no peace at all. Justice for Native Americans necessitates, first and foremost, respect for the right of self-determination for Native Americans as well as abiding by "the spirit and letter of the law" of treaties between the United States government and Native American peoples.

The profits of multi-national corporations should in no way be used to justify human exploitation and the destruction of the environment. If the excessive pollution of the waters continues, then there will be no fish left for anyone. If strip mining continues to expand throughout the nation, then the entire ecological balance will be severely damaged. The truth is the rights of Native Americans are the rights of all Americans. We must not let our Native American sisters and brothers stand alone.

### The Budget Dance

The annual Washington budget dance is underway and, as in past years, it will most likely continue right up to the end of the federal fiscal year in the fall.

The steps to this dance are pretty simple: one of the dancers sings "no new taxes" while presenting an austerity budget.

The other dancers try to follow, introducing small variations such as slightly higher spending for some domestic programs and a bit less for others.

At the end of the dance the partners come together in a hectic finale that leaves them and experienced budget-watchers exhausted, as the band plays the Gramm-Rodman-Hollings theme.

That's the one that makes automatic budget cuts if deficit reduction targets aren't met.

Lawmakers have been doing this dance for years, evading the "no new taxes" theme with an array of user fees and indirect taxes.

In fact, there have been very large tax increases over the years when the fiction was upheld that taxes were cut.

Those tax hikes came in the form of sharply higher social security taxes and in state and local tax hikes.

Since the federal government cut domestic programs so heavily, the states had to step in to provide more services. Inevitably, that meant raising more revenues through state taxes.

More of the same is in the offing, as the federal government has set ambitious new goals in education and in transportation, without putting up the money to reach those goals.

Much of today's disillusionment with government derives from the budget dance that tolerates huge deficits, ignores the needs of the poor, slashes important domestic programs, and mandates higher local taxes.

The situation is made worse by lip service to preserving programs that help poor people, while cutting those pro-

grams. The current budget proposals are no exception.

We hear a lot about expanding some programs that serve low income families, but we hear a lot less about the fact that the proposed increases for those programs are more than offset by cuts in the total funding of programs aimed at low income Americans.

After adjusting for inflation, the Administration's budget plans would cut some programs by a total of \$2 billion.

And some of those cuts would actually undermine areas where spending is on the rise.

The long overdue and very welcome expansion of Head Start funding, for example, got lots of publicity. But at the same time, the Administration's budget would end the Community Services Block Grant, which assists community action agencies.

What does that have to do with Head Start?

Plenty, since those local agencies operate over a third of all Head Start programs.

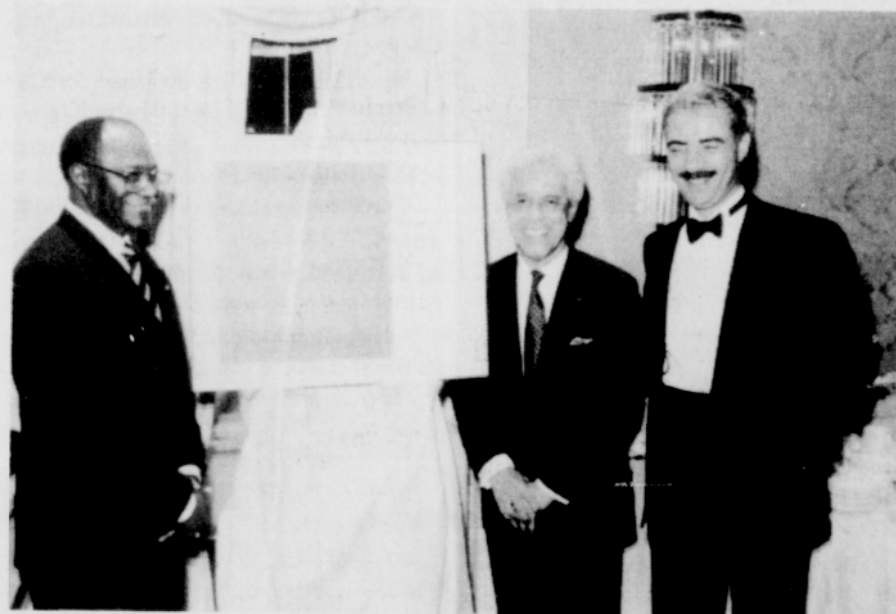
The budget also proposes cuts in such key areas as community service employment for senior citizens, summer jobs for youth, community development grants, public housing, and others.

Planned cuts in low-income energy assistance would drop some 2 million households from this important program.

And even the big boost in anti-drug spending is sliced in such a way that a mere 16 percent would go to desperately needed treatment programs.

So the budget dance continues, but to a very sad song for the poor.

Unless the Administration and the Congress come together behind more realistic priorities, we'll be in for a continuation of the 1980s policies of neglecting human needs and disinvesting in programs that build our future economy.



**BILL OF RIGHTS!**--George Knox, III, Staff Vice President, Public Affairs, Philip Morris Companies Inc., right, presents a framed copy of the 200 year old Bill of Rights to Eddie N. Williams, President of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, while Virginia's first African American governor, L. Douglas Wilder, center, adds his approval. The presentation was made during the Philip Morris-sponsored pre-banquet reception for the Center's 20th Anniversary Dinner at the Washington Hilton Hotel, where President and Mrs. Bush were among the guests.

### Black United Fund Wins Multi-Federal Campaign For Second Straight Year

The Black United Fund of New York (BUFNY), announced today that for the second straight year it has been selected by the New York Federal Executive Board to serve as the Principal Combined Fund Organization (PCFO), campaign manager for the 1990/91 New York City Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

Prior to BUF's management last year, the United Way had managed the campaign since its inception 33 years ago. The United Way also made a bid to manage this year's campaign but James Fox, Assistant Director in charge of the FBI and the 1990/91 CFC Campaign Chairperson cites, "particularly the competitiveness of the budget estimate and the track record of innovation and energetic effort made during the previous years campaign", as the principle reason for selecting BUF to manage this year's campaign.

As first-time managers, BUFNY raised 1.9 million dollars for 914 charities. BUF also increased the average gift over the 1988/90 United Way-managed campaign, from \$50 to \$56

and increased payroll deductions from \$71 to \$76 with less campaign cost and within less time than the United Ways' managed campaign of which 1.8 million was raised.

The CFC, which started in 1957, is the only workplace solicitation of Federal Employees reaching 73,000 in New York City.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity to raise funds for the needy here in New York," said Kermit Eady, President of BUFNY, "and we look forward to raising even more money next year," he continued.

The Black United Fund of New York is an independent philanthropic organization designed to organize the human and financial resource of African Americans to support the growth, development and empowerment of the Black Community and in turn, society at large. During its 10 year history, BUFNY has provided financial and technical support to over 200 community based organizations and has completed 41 units.

Well now, last week's little adventure in curriculum, "Humpty Dumpty", played quite well. Several teachers called to say they will try this exercise in logic/imagination. One parent asked if I was "serious"? "Quite," I replied and went on to relate all the wonderful little games and fables that teachers (and parents) once used to capture a child's attention, and to develop his reasoning powers. The seemingly "simplistic" exercises I described involve a methodology which is the basis of the so-called "scientific method."

We just received some interesting information that relates here and to my April 18 critique of the SAT--I quoted a major university administrator (white), "We find these tests (SAT) very reliable in predicting future performance." But in the mail this morning I got the April issue of New Directions, the Howard University magazine. Just installed as the new president of this prestigious institution was Dr. Franklin G. Jennifer--a D.C. kid from the wrong side of the tracks whom Howard U. rejected for admission in 1957 because his SAT scores were so low.

**"The genes are still there; it is the learning system which has a disability"**

I love it! That the career of this erudite microbiologist from a single-parent home--establishing an enviable reputation in academia (Rutgers), and in the laboratory (Dept. of Agriculture)--so pointedly underlines my contention that "the genes are still there; it is the learning system which has a disability." I am sure that when Mr. Jennifer became "Chancellor of the Massachusetts Board of Regents (1987) he remembered particular "mentors" described in the New Directions article, especially those who intervened (inspired) immediately following the high school SAT disaster. But as fortunate as those encounters are--even the structured remedial programs--must we always wait on fortuitous circumstance?

So let us return again to our "Humpty Dumpty" mode. What we do early on is so very, very important. Though it need not be so, perhaps what follows should be directed to "curriculum designers"--but from my own experience a teacher spends a lot of time doing just that; preparing a lesson plan quickly evolves into an exercise in the same type semantic judgements we wished to train the children to make. No matter how many "blue books" and similar teacher aids furnished by school administration, one is always, by definition, preparing a curriculum for the day; "a rose is a rose, is a rose."

Last week's exploration into the "meaning" of meaning is, at a higher level, the subject of extensive studies and analyses by experts in language, semantics, mathematics, and computer design, just to list a few investigators. There is an entire field devoted solely to the "meaning of signs": semiotics.

### Six in 10 Blacks Had Continuous Health Insurance Coverage, Census Survey Shows

Sixty-two percent of the nation's Blacks had continuous private or government health insurance coverage from February 1985 to May 1987, according to a survey by the Commerce Department's Census Bureau.

Three out of four Whites and two out of four Hispanics had continuous health coverage over the same period, the survey showed.

About 6 percent of Blacks had no coverage over the period, 5 percent had coverage for one to six months, 6 percent for seven to 14 months, 9 percent for 15 to 21 months, and 12 percent for 22 to 27 months.

Forty percent of Blacks had continuous coverage from private health insurance, while 25 percent had no private health insurance coverage at all. The proportions for Whites were 65 percent and 10 percent, and for Hispanics, 35 percent and 26 percent. The difference



by Professor McKinley Burt

A sign, of course, may take on many forms and many shades of meaning. We have the alphabet, pictographs, images, hieroglyphics, traffic lights, map symbols, words, icons, you name it! But the underlying logic that makes signs useful is the fact that the people using them have adopted a "convention"--they can communicate because it is their tradition that a specific sign shall have a specific meaning.

When, next I give another example of learning models I've used with small children (as well as older ones), we wish to keep in mind that it is convention and mutual acceptance which makes a "new" language workable, e.g. in computers and other technologies. As Humpty Dumpty would put it, "Things mean what I say they mean . . . Things are whatever I say they are." With this in mind let us look again at some of the learning models I introduced last week.

When I did several of my demonstrations in computer applications (as in Montessori Schools or in the Dalles Junior High School), I began with such explanations about the nature of "language". Since the "electronic" imprints on magnetic tape are invisible, I used the earlier "punched tape" (paper) mode in my machines. Children of all ages easily understood my exposition of signs as alphabetical characters or numerals, no matter what form they took (last week's apples, potatoes, oranges, whatever). In this demo the code was "hole or no hole", as appeared in the paper tape. For instance a sequence, "hole-hole-no hole-hole" was agreed by convention (mutual acceptance) as the letter "C". In the same vein, the sequence "no hole-hole-hole-hole" might be mutually accepted to represent the number 8 (Actually, I used "eight level" tape).

In no time at all, children of all ages were able to count, multiply, write letters and otherwise communicate or compute in the new language. Soon, and without pain, they very well understood that beside the absolute or specific "meaning" of a sign, any such symbol or image can become the basis of a new language. And, on their own, they will go on to extrapolate new applications that will surely amaze you. We note here that "hole-no hole" logic used to parallel the electrical format in computers and microchips is a "binary" operation originated by the ancient Africans 6000 years ago. Their innovation is preserved for us on the "Rhind Papyrus" and other recovered documents. I hope the Portland School District is using this and other lesson plans I designed for them.

#### 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.

## PORTLAND OBSERVER

(USPS 959-680)

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN-AMERICAN PUBLICATION

Established in 1970

Alfred L. Henderson  
Publisher

Gary Ann Garnett  
Business Manager

Joyce Washington  
Operations Manager

Leon Harris  
Editorial Manager

### PORTLAND OBSERVER

is published weekly by

Exie Publishing Company, Inc.

4747 N.E. M.L.K., Jr. Blvd.

Portland, Oregon 97211

P.O. Box 3137

Portland, Oregon 97208

(503) 288-0933 (Office) \* FAX #: (503) 288-0015

Deadlines for all submitted materials:

Articles: Monday, 5 P.M. -- Ads: Tuesday, 5 P.M.

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

The PORTLAND OBSERVER welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope. All created designed display ads become the sole property of this newspaper and can not be used in other publications or personal usage, without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. 1990 PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

Subscriptions: \$20.00 per year in the Tri-County area; \$25.00 all other areas.

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

