

Crisis In Education

BY PROFESSOR MCKINLEY BURT

The recent election in Oregon held the possibility that a double whammy might be inflicted upon the education process in this state. This is not an exaggeration. Specific reference is to two extremely volatile propositions: Measure 5 (Property Tax Limitation), and Measure 11 (School Choice).

There should be no sighs of relief among education activists because only one of these volatile measures passed. That says more about the convulsive nature of participatory government and the (Initiative) process than it reflects some conciliatory compromise reached by the citizenry, the (double) crunch would have seen on the one hand a massive reduction in school funds by tax limitation and on the other, school choice would have brought about a logistical nightmare for the financially drained school systems, and 5, the tax limitation did pass.

So where does that leave us? Well, for one thing, over the years the Oregon State Legislature has consistently refused to come forth with any structured program to address the problem of under financed school systems in this state -- nor has it tackled the situation of geographical inequities in educational resources available. There have been, of course, sporadic forays in the area of the

taxpayer's and consumer's pocketbook, vizaviz sales taxes -- but these have been consistently defeated by the voters.

Now, the defeat of these "revenue enhancing" measures may stem from the fact that disillusioned voters have only past performance upon which to evaluate the 'good intentions' their representatives in the legislature or administrative bodies, they know from experience it is the case that funds designated for an announced purpose more often than not are diverted for "emergencies", or used for hidden agendas, but more tellingly, the voters have demanded, in a 'read-my-lips' style, an 'adult' approach to the solution of a problem that can further devastate this primarily lumber-based economy.

This state of affairs does not bode well for the host of public servants who are dashing about helter skelter in a media frenzy to see who can come up the fastest with New Tax Measures to plug the dike. again, based upon previous evaluations of the voters, these productions may not getto 'Broadway' either, so what is the answer? can we, the citizens of this state interact any more effectively with our representatives in the state house than we have been able to do with our congressional delegation -- given the economic and social debacles we have at the national level?

It was in the Oregonian for September 20, that writer Bill Graves furnished

the following quote: "Oregon public schools hit by a new round of levy failures Tuesday and facing a court challenge and initiatives to limit property taxes and expand school choice, are Slipping Toward Chaos," state leaders say. If two thirds of this dire forecast has come true -- and it has -- the creek has indeed risen over its banks, and the proverbial alligators are right among us.

Now where does all of this leave the African American parent and child -- and the innercity school system, it is a situation fraught with even more dangers than this newspaper has outlined in its years-long examination of the Portland School System. How many of the 'disadvantaged' and remedial programs in mathematics and reading will be canceled? What will be the impact upon special programs like MESA? How much clandestine diversions and manipulation will occur as bureaucrats scurry to save the ship?

This is a time when more than ever African American parents must be 'on top of things' (all parents of course) and certainly they are going to need the special input that African American teachers, principals and administrators can provide, and we have got to expect/demand the support of our community organizations -- lest the educational level of the majority of the kids goes downward rather than upward. It can be done. It 'has' to be done!

Downtown Nike Branch Opens

Nike Town is Nike's prototype for the sporting goods store of the future: part Disneyland, claims Nike, and part sports and fitness center.

The oft-changing downtown store opens today, Wednesday, at 11 a.m., after a preliminary tour offered to the press, held Tuesday and conducted by the architect of the building, Gordon Thompson, as well as Nike's VP/Marketing Tom Clarke and VP/Salesman Nick Kartalis.

The new branch of Nike, which for months has been attracting attention with its somewhat hidden television screens and taped athletic noises, recently swapped the intriguing look for a more updated, industrial look in time for the opening. The branch is located on the corner of Sixth and Salmon in downtown Portland, across the street from the stop for bus #6, Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, with parking available at the City Center garage next door. Parking passes for this garage are available through Nike.

Further questions may be answered at Nike town, 930 S.W. Sixth (telephone number 503-221-6453; FAX number 503-223-8577) or by calling (503) 671-3507 (Nike's public relations number) and asking for Liz Dolan or Barb Audiss.

Farrakhan

from front page

he charged the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, charged him. And a vicious enemy, sitting back watching this, with agents on both sides feeding the fire with fuel, culminating in Malcolm's assassination. AS a Muslim--there were many Muslim's who that didn't bother. But for me--it bothered me [pause]. And it bothers me to this day.

Farrakhan removed his glasses and placed them on the table. He wiped a second round of tears from his eyes. He would later reveal that this was the first time he had ever cried in front of a reporter.

Emerge: Obviously, this is still a source of deep pain. Has it been with you the whole while, all this time?

Farrakhan: It's not just that. In the history of religion, religious disputes have caused people to shed each other's blood, killing one another over religion. Some of those disputes created divisions that are a thousand years old and hatreds that are a thousand years old. And people are still killing because of the lack of respect for life and our willingness to settle our differences by taking the lives of other human beings. So I'm looking a Malcolm's assassination, and I see the pain in not just those who love Malcolm but the pain that continues from generation to generation, fueled by the enemy. The enemy sees Louis Farrakhan mounting up on wings today, rebuilding the Nation. There is no living person they can bring against Louis Farrakhan.

So they say there is a resurgence of malcolm. But there is not a resurgence. Somebody from the dead doesn't get up from the dead; somebody living has to raise somebody from the dead. Kennedy is dead. There's no resurgence of Kennedy unless somebody living creates the resurgence. So there are smart, wicked enemies who are trying their best to bring Malcolm back to public attention, not because they want people to honor Malcolm but [because] they want to bring Malcolm back to say subtly now things that they never said in '65 when Malcolm was assassinated.

My name was never brought up as a conspirator or as one who may have killed or hurt Malcolm X. But because of the crest of popularity--I'm riding this great wave of popular support--now the enemy wants to make Louis Farrakhan the jealous, wicked heir of Malcolm, since I took over the mosque. I didn't take over the mosque from Malcolm; I was ordered there by Elijah Muhammad. I didn't scheme against my brother to get that position; I was given that position. Nor did I scheme against Warith Deen [Muhammad] to get where I am. I'm not that kind of human being. But here I am in this position, and so the wickedly wise devils want to bring Malcolm back, to use the growing popularity of Malcolm against the rise of Farrakhan. But no weapon formed against the righteous will prosper. The more they elevate Malcolm, they cannot help but elevate the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, which were and are the base of Malcolm X.

So we are a winner, regardless.

But I do not wish to see the pain and the hatred continued. Malcolm's children have lost their father. Malcolm's widow has lost her husband. There is nothing anybody can say or do to bring Malcolm back, to ease the pain and the grief of that family. There is nothing we can do to bring back Martin Luther King to his family and to his people. But the least we can do is not pass on the generations the hatred, the pettiness, the things that we did in our immaturity that helped to create the climate in which he could be assassinated, that hopefully we will learn a lesson from his life and his death. God is allowing it, and Malcolm's name is being heard again, and people are going back and studying Malcolm's words and waking up all over again. It speeds up the general rise in the consciousness of our people. I hope that you will forgive me [for crying], but I feel this pain, not only for the dead but also for the living and the unborn generations that have to read the history and will be affected by the history. And so whatever wrongs have been done, the wrongs have to be corrected so that we give our children a better legacy to build on than the legacy of hatred and hypocrisy and injustice that we perpetuate one against the other.

Emerge: I didn't realize until this moment that they had tried to use Malcolm in that way. I knew there was a resurgence of interest in Malcolm, but I didn't realize that they were trying to pit you against him.

Farrakhan: Not only is it now, but Malcolm's autobiography was made required reading in colleges throughout the United States because the last chapter of his book denounces the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. And anybody that becomes aware of Malcolm through his book falls in love with Malcolm, and then when they close the book they dislike the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Black Muslims because they feel that the Black Muslims deprived the world of this giant. So when you make that required reading, get everybody to read it, what are doing that for? You never made the writings of [Marcus] Garvey required, the writings of [W.E.B.] DuBois required, the writings of any of our great scholars required. Why Malcolm, when white folks said he was a hater, he was this, he was that, he was a demagogue? That and all the names that Playthell Benjamin attributed to me are the same names members of the press attributed to Malcolm, even at the time of his death.

Emerge: The Playthell Benjamin article, which one are you referring to? The one...

Farrakhan: ...in Emerge [February 1990].

Emerge: Let me ask you something. This...

Farrakhan: Man, I didn't expect my emotions to be that strong. But I just want, in honesty--As I said to Brother Akbar, there are certain painful episodes in my life that time doesn't heal, and every time I think that I've gotten away from it, something will bring me back to it and let me know that the wound is there.

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