

# EDITORIAL

The Portland Observer

p e r s p e c t i v e s

## Immigration vs African American II

By Professor McKinley Burt  
It is quite apparent that the escalating level of new immigrants has hit a social economic nerve of Portland blacks as well as those in other parts of the nation. The only surprising thing was the extent some had gone in evaluating the phenomena: Far beyond a simple observation of numbers. And there was a variety of communications, phone, mail and FAX.

When I first introduced this subject last week, it was with the knowledge that there is always a certain number of 'us' who will remain "politically correct" no matter what the cost. That is there are those who no matter the presence and eminence of the danger will never speak out, if the issue involves another ethnic group(s). Not to worry! In the last few days I have received everything from a "History of Korea" and a 1960s classic on European Immigration "Going to America" by Terry Coleman to a chart made up by a black college

student who used Black History Month material from the February, 1990 Portland Observer to draw a parallel between European and Asian immigration and the importation of Africans as slaves.

A California reader of this paper faxed some interesting projections of the "Asian-American Manufacturers' Association; accompanied by some rather acid commentary on people "who do not understand that they are in competition for their very survival": sounded like some of my comments on "people who do not learn from history". She also sent a May 14, 1987, Los Angeles Sentinel, "Black Aliens Get Amnesty Aid Office" clipping. This black newspaper featured an interview of Roy Innis, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Stating that not enough was being done to help black illegal aliens obtain amnesty, the director opened a local immigration assistance office

aimed primarily at serving those of African descent (5/87). Mr. Innis, himself a native of the Virgin Islands, said "The amnesty outreach efforts are concentrated exclusively of Hispanics of Mexico and Central America and the legalization needs of a million undocumented black Aliens are not being met."

Several offices were immediately opened in Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Jose. The organization had already developed; 'Amnesty Assistance Sites' in Miami, New York and Chicago. According to Innis, most black, illegal aliens from the side of the Atlantic are from Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, Belize, Costa Rica, St. Vincent, St. Kitts and Nevis. He speaks very positively about their talents and industriousness--and charges black leadership with a weak advocacy for their own.

Innis was at odds with the Congressional Black Caucus during the congressional debate of

the "Simpson-Mazzoli, cum rodino bill which would have made it as easy for black illegal aliens to obtain amnesty as for Hispanics. "I fought for Simpson-Mazzoli, but the black leadership holding some kind of sympathetic position with Hispanics fought against it," Innis said.

Mr. Innis continued, "Unlike Hispanic illegal aliens who walk across the U.S.-Mexican border, over 90% of black illegal aliens attain that status only after first entering legitimately: As students who overstay their visas after graduating or as visitors who overstay their allotted time. Domestic comprise a third significant group," He continued his indictment of the black leadership and their failure to assist "a million blacks "in this country--Hispanics don't need an amnesty bill", he went on bitterly, "They have amnesty--California, Texas, Ari-

zona--you kick them out of any one of these states and they come back through another one."

From another article in the same 5/14/87 issue of the Los Angeles Sentinel, we have further indication that many elements of our leadership fail to anticipate events that are clearly seen to be presaged by earlier situations. Reference here is to the ethnic patterns of destruction wrecked by the Los Angeles rioters last year. "Crenshaw Merchants Launch Asian Protest" screams a headline. Blacks began demonstrating against Asian merchants operating stalls in the middle of Crenshaw Blvd, long the hub of a key, fashionable black owned business district. Protesting the further "infiltration: of the district by "Asians benefitting from "Federal Loan Policy", African American business people are picketing this so called "Crenshaw Swap Meet".

A black Viet Nam war veteran who is leading the protests, rails against

a conspiracy between the feds, real estate investors and Asian developers to take over prime African American areas and the traditional communities. This trend had started in 1963, the year I left Los Angeles to come back to Oregon. There is no way that blacks, no matter how progressive and determined, would stand up against that combine of forces plus the leverage of Asian money coming in from overseas, including, Hong Kong. Some declared the entire debacle to be a repeat of what happened to African American communities in the first half of this century--when European immigration shut off black progress as I have recently detailed here (And the leadership stood by).

Next week; more revelations and do we have leadership here? (After all the Los Angeles Leadership refused to see the protesters 5 years 'before' the riots: Mayor Tom Bradley Assembly-woman Maxine Waters, and City Councilwoman Pat Russell).

## The Bottom Line On Borrowing

BY LARRY SCHWARTZ,  
WEST ONE BANK, OREGON

Exceptionally low interest rates have prompted many people to borrow money for major purchases. If you are a first-time borrower, here is some basic information about getting a loan to work for you.

### LOAN CRITERIA

When applying for a loan, the application is reviewed for three things: your character is judged by your record of financial responsibility. That is, how have you paid your

bills and prior debts? Capital is measured by your financial resource, including savings, investments, home equity, autos, insurance and household possessions. The lender may want you to pledge some of these assets as collateral for the loan. Capacity is determined by your earning power (now and in the future) and your present financial obligations.

### OTHER VARIABLES

The amount you may be able to borrow also depends on other considerations such as the source and amount

of your income, length of residence, job stability, and types of accounts you have with the lender. The lender will also want to know the purpose of the loan, the collateral (if any) you can provide to secure the loan, and the type of loan you want.

Your monthly consumer debt payments should be kept at around 35 to 38 percent of gross pay. Monthly consumer debt includes credit cards, school loans, car loans, other personal loans, and home equity loans or mortgages.

Single payment loans require repayment on demand, or after a set time period, such as 30, 60 or 90 days. These types of loans usually require some collateral.

A line of credit allows you to access a per-determined amount by writing an overdraft on your checking account. Funds are advanced from the line of credit into your checking account in set amounts. Of course, you are responsible for the amount overdrawn as well as an overdraft fee. Cash advances on a credit card

can be obtained by using special checks provided by the card issuer. The amount of the check is added to your billing statement and incurs a finance charge.

Second mortgages, or home equity loans, allow you to access the equity in your home. There are several types of home equity loans available, but all have one very attractive feature: interest charges are tax deductible, in most cases.

Finding the right loan for you can be confusing with so many

choices. Fortunately, an increasing variety of financing tools can be tailored to suit your needs and financial situation.

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## "THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT" The Politics Of Education

By DR. LENORA FULANI

Reverend Jesse Jackson may know something about being a power broker, but--with all due respect--he doesn't know anything about education.

If he did, or if he wanted to learn he would have been in Brooklyn at P.S. 156 talking to the Black and Puerto Rican parents who took over their children's dilapidated school a few weeks ago, and to me, instead of brainstorming the country's high schools telling inner city youth that it's "honorable" for them to snitch on one another to the police. Reverend Jackson isn't putting forward a new theory of learning. He has no analysis of why the schools are failing to teach our children. What he's saying has nothing to do with education. He's simply playing politics with our children's minds, and with their future.

Reverend Jackson's new "crusade" against Black-on-Black violence--which is to be chaired by the

actor Bill Cosby--calls for inner city youth to sign a pledge which reads, in part: "It is my moral obligation and I therefore pledge that if I am aware of guns or drugs in my school, I will convey to the proper authorities where the weapon or drugs can be located."

The rabidly racist New York Post condescendingly applauded Reverend Jackson in an editorial: "There is much to be commended in this message. It is an implicit call for Black youth to move beyond the politics of victimization--that politics which encourages the inner-city poor to blame the ills in their communities on white racism and other insidious outside forces, real and imaginary. Jackson hasn't become any sort of conservative--he makes that clear. But he is asking for a change in emphasis in Black American politics that can only be welcomed."

Reverend Jackson's "change in emphasis"--a distinctly rightward turn--is certainly opportune at a time when the resurgence of reaction is

chilling the political climate in New York as it is in the rest of the country. (On November 2 David Dinkins, the city's first Black mayor, went down to defeat at the hands of a right-wing Republican in a city where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans five to one.)

But no person of good will could welcome the Jackson-Cosby "crusade": its anti-Black, anti-poor, anti-youth strategy contains nothing new and nothing educational. The assumption that inner city kids are stupid and destructive pervades public policy on education; that political attitude fuels the failure of the public schools to reach our children, who are blamed, along with their parents, for the failure. Yes, all kinds of "solutions"--some of them explicitly reactionary, others "liberal" (but, from a scientific vantage point, equally invalid)--are put forward from time to time. But none of them address the consequences of that attitude, or raises the question of how children need to learn in order

to live in our post modern world.

Clearly, the traditional Euro-centric educational model--which forces students to compete with one another to determine who is "smarter" and who is "dumber" (based on who can reproduce the most information on tests)--is entirely irrelevant to the lives of inner-city youth (something which they understand very well).

This is why the All Stars Talent Show Network, the Barbara Taylor School in Harlem, and Pregnant Productions, a brand-new teen pregnancy prevention program in the South Bronx, are so significant. They are providing strong evidence that inner-city youngsters--including those who have been written off as "learning disabled" and "troublemakers"--can learn and develop.

The All Stars, the Barbara Taylor School and Pregnant Productions are examples of a whole new approach to education which is based on the discovery that when young people lead, they're most likely to learn and

develop. (It's why they're forced to be passive consumers of information in environments other people create for them that they tend to fail, and eventually rebel.)

The new approach, which is popularly known as "Leading to Learn," is the product of some 20 years of work on the part of psychologists, philosophers and educators around the world, including two of my closest colleagues--Dr. Fred Newman and Dr. Lois Holzman.

This international community/movement of scholars, teachers and clinicians has been inspired by the work of Lev Vygotsky, an early Soviet psychologist whose studies of how young children acquire language produced extraordinary insights into how all human beings learn and develop. Vygotskians argue that learning is in fact not a private, individual behavior but a social activity; that the "natural" environment in which children learn is one they actively participate in creating together (rather than com-

peting against one another), and where they are encouraged to perform "in advance of" their development.

Imagine the impact such an approach would have if it were brought into public schools and communities around the country!

But I don't believe there can be genuine educational reform unless we have much more democracy at every level of government. The exclusion of the community from the decision-making process--a case in point being the situation at P.S. 156, where parents were forced to take matters into their own hands after the authorities displayed gross insensitivity to their concerns for their children's education--makes it highly unlikely that new approaches, new ideas, and new methods will be made welcome. In the absence of parent and student involvement in re-tooling and running the decision-making process, politicians like Reverend Jackson will continue to play political football with our children's lives.

## Letter To The Editor

McKinley Burt's "Perspectives" on "Immigration Versus The African Black Family" sends an unfortunate message, that the "increasing tide of Asian and Hispanic immigration constitutes a serious threat to the economic welfare of blacks."

This message feeds on current anti-immigrant hysteria and turns blacks against other people of color when by rights, they should be each others' solid allies. A rainbow coalition of the dispossessed and left-out is the only hope for for seizing political and economic power in this white racist society.

True, blacks are suffering some of the worst ever unemployment, poverty, and cuts in social services, housing, education, and business loans. But who is responsible? Who caused the massive de-industrialization of our major cities, the "downsizing" of companies employing blacks, the loss of shipyard employment here in Portland, the disruption of black communities and businesses by freeway, coliseum and hospital expansion? Who controls most of the property in black communities? Who is responsible for fueling the tax revolt, devastating equal opportunity education and housing programs, and smashing minority set-asides?

Big business, run by a few rich white folks, is behind all this misery.

True, as the U.N. State of World population report estimates, there are at least 100 million international migrants living outside their own countries, fleeing political violence and warfare; environmental destruction; or poverty and economic crisis. But again, who is responsible? The same big business-multi-national corporations with the aid of the U.S. military--is disrupting the lives of Third World peoples. Don't we all have a common enemy?

Certainly, as Burt explains, blacks were displaced from businesses and jobs a century ago by European immigrants, who were integrated in to the dominant society within a generation. However, Asian and Latino immigrants, by in large, were and continue to be segregated into farm work, domestic, restaurant and other low wage employment.

The Rand Corporation, the Heritage Foundation and the Urban Institute all report that immigrants do not take jobs from native workers or adversely affect wages and employment opportunities.

Serious analysts across the political spectrum have found that the

average immigrant family uses fewer public services than the average native-born family and their tax contributions exceed the cost of services they do use.

No doubt some of the new arrivals are being doled out a few business loans and prime jobs, such as construction, which have been historically closed to blacks. Divide and conquer is nothing new. But immigrants of color have historically fallen on the dark side of the Black/White color line in this country.

In America's major population centers, white conservative politicians are benefiting from the tragic tensions between blacks and immigrants. Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago all have lost their liberal black mayors. Major riots have erupted between black and immigrant communities. In Portland, the tensions are not yet that extreme or violent. The alliance of Korean grocers and Gabi's Lounge against the OLCC, the Hotel Workers Organizing Committee, and the Rainbow Coalition education committee are all examples of African American-immigrant unity to fight for power. There must be a way.

Sincerely, Jamie Partridge  
SE Portland

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