

EDITORIAL

The Portland Observer

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

Immigration vs African Americans III

By Prof. MCKINLEY BURT

Well, last week we saw it was not a new phenomenon among blacks that they should be disturbed by the economic inroads upon their welfare occasioned by immigration on a heightened scale. Though there were earlier, quite determined responses, I thought my description of the efforts of Roy Innis, Director of CORE, were the highlight of a mid 1980s recognition of a problem.

It is understandable that Mr. Innis would perceive Hispanic immigration as the greatest threat to African American employment and small business development opportunities. Palpable and highly visible friction had been developing for decades in fast-growing Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas like Los Angeles ("Urban Centers" to you). There was fierce competition among ethnic groups for a declining number of jobs, and as noted black sociologist, Andrew Billingsley described it, "technological changes in the 1950s and 1960s, then automa-

tion and an inevitable decline in manufacturing jobs made dramatic changes in the work force in central cities." This while immigration mounted daily.

The unfortunate result of such developments is that they always seem to place minority groups in competition with each other for survival--whether in today's central cities or in so-called 'Third World Countries', many of which are still colonies except in name. It is a matter of long debate whether the establishment (formal government or ruling class) deliberately develops such antagonisms in order to control and cheapen labor. Is there a NAFTA in your future?

Since the days of "The Monroe Doctrine, 1823" (Europe, you keep your greedy hands off our Latino friends to the South--we "own" them), there has been little but unrest, revolution, exploitation, coups and other American manipulation of Mexico, Central America and South America. Then, there are the boasts and confes-

sions of the Marine general, Smedley Butler, who terrorized and controlled many of these regions and the Caribbean for the benefit of American industry and agricultural interests: Nicaragua, Panama, Honduras, Cuba, Haiti, Etc. Describing himself as little more than a gangster or racketeer, the General detailed "33 years and 4 months" of making these areas "Safe for democracy and oil" (1902-1935). We shouldn't omit the "United Fruit Company".

Shall we wonder then that Latin America furnishes the millions of exploited souls that assail our borders each year? Does it matter whether they are called asylum seekers, political refugees, wet backs or 'pardner'? And those of us registering apprehension should remember, too, the observation of Mr. Innis: "The legalization needs of a million undocumented black aliens are not being met".

While it is true that several years ago I presented here a rather detailed and well documented research on early

European immigration as it affected African Americans, I believe I omitted a 1972 Portland experience that once again has relevance to blacks in crafts and in education. At the time I was not only chief accountant but administrator of the Dept. of Labor Craft Training Programs in operation at a local "minority" manufacturing plant. There were perhaps a half-dozen black 'machine tool' trainees.

At first, many of us were naive enough to suppose that this small but evidently good faith effort on the part of government and union to train blacks in the operation of machine tools was just that; accompanied as it was by much rhetoric on the part of both black and white social engineers to the effect that this program was an important milestone in American industry. Imagine my consternation when I ran across that 1966 study, "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: Immigration". Our friendly U.S. Dept. of Labor had

developed a massive overseas program to recruit and grant U.S. citizenship to thousands of white machine tool operators and trainees from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Scandinavia.

I was immediately reminded of the travesty I reported the other week, when I told how the ninth and Tenth Black Calvary was promised title to many fertile acres of land along the new Union Pacific Railroad Line--an achievement their indomitable coverage made possible. It was the very same in those earlier days last century, the U.S. government ran ads in the Port City newspapers of northern Europe inviting farmers to emigrate to America and gain free title to these very lands. They also put up huge colored posters in public places. As late as 1974 there was a 4' by 3' copy on the wall of the lobby of the Pitcock Block Building at S.W. Tenth and Washington (The building was the local office for the Union Pacific and other railroads). The "Buffalo Sol-

diers" fared no better than have black machine tool operators today.

So it is that working people in this country and in other lands feel that they have in many cases been placed in deliberate (and Unnecessary) competition with each other for obvious reasons. Across the sea we see ethnic Germans protesting and rioting against the presence of foreign workers and refugees seeking political asylum, Poles, Czechs, Turks, North Africans, etc. Steffen Heitmann, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's nominee for President of Germany, with drew from consideration under pressure from The World Jewish Congress, Women's Rights groups, and similar organizations. Heitmann was quoted, "more attention should be paid to Germans who feel overrun by refugees and other foreigners--women's proper role is mother".

Do these things go together? More next week.

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT Is Development Possible?

By Dr. LENORA FULANI

On November 5 I had the honor of introducing Dr. Fred Newman, my colleague and dear friend, to some 600 social service workers, educators, students, community organizers and just plain folks who had come to hear his annual lecture, which is sponsored by the East Side Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy. Dr. Newman is the director of training at the Institute, the national center for training in the non-Eurocentric, anti-psychological therapeutic and educational approach known as social therapy which he began developing more than 20 years ago.

The topic of Dr. Newman's talk was "Creating Our Lives." I want to tell you about it because I believe that his discovery of an approach that can reinitiate development in children and adults is of crucial importance to our people at a moment in history when psychologists and educators are echoing the economists who say that development has reached a dead end.

The underlying racist message of

that statement, Dr. Newman pointed out, is the reason development is over is that who we're trying to educate now are children of color. Much of the educational and academic elite in this country believe that these children, our children, are not as educable as white children. But Dr. Newman and his colleagues--I am very proud to be one of them--don't believe that racist myth and don't believe that our children can't grow. It's precisely that self-serving and profoundly racist assumption which we are challenging.

Social therapy takes its inspiration from the work of Lev Vygotsky, a Russian Jew who in the years just after the revolution for 1917 challenged all the assumptions that have been the basis of the Western "science" of Psychology since the 19th century.

A central assumption of the Psychology is that human development is something that happens to, and in, individuals. (Not surprisingly, the "normal" "model" individual in this scheme represents those who dominate Western economy, society and

culture: rich white men.) But leaving aside the moral and political objections to this assumption, there is a huge scientific problem with the notion of individual development: that's not how it happens, Vygotsky said. For evidence, he looked at how very young children develop, and in particular how they learn to speak in a "conjoint activity" with other people. It's the same in all societies: babies babble, and "experienced" speakers--older children and adults--talk back to them, relating to these "inexperienced" speakers members of the speaking community. We do this by encouraging the little ones to do something "in advance of" themselves (to talk without "knowing how"); they are included in the community of speakers in such a way that they are able to imitate those who already know what to do. As adults we don't interpret, analyze or explain what babies "say" to us when they babble. We "complete" their thought for them. (When a baby says "Ba-ba," we say: "You want your bottle!")

Interpretation, analysis and explanation are all expressions of the competitiveness that structures "normal" adult conversation, regardless of what we are saying to one another; typically, how we talk to one another isn't developmental because we are not building--completing--something socially, but competing individualistically; we listen just until we can take "our turn, to be able to say what we have to say.

The point is that human beings develop socially, with other people, or we don't develop. That's why there can't be a "science" of human development, a psychology, unless it rests on the social nature of our specialties; a "psychology" based on the assumption of individual development is a myth.

"So we sought to find a way of creating a learning approach, a therapeutic approach, which was fundamentally committed to development and, therefore, fundamentally dedicated to the socialness of human beings," Dr. Newman told his audience. "What we have discovered, after many

years of work by many dedicated people, is an approach to children and adults which has the capacity to reinitiate development. If human beings cannot continue to grow, if human beings cannot continue to develop, they cannot get better."

On the following afternoon, 250 people practiced learning to talk the way babies learn to do it--by "completing" rather than competing with each other--and doing so caught a glimpse of what Dr. Newman and his colleagues mean by reinitiating development.

For if we don't find a way to reinitiate development, Dr. Newman said, "We are doomed. At this moment in history, the very question of continued development is being raised. Can we create a global environment in which human development can continue?"

It takes a lot of guts to ask that question these days--and even more to devote every waking hour, as Dr. Newman has done--to come up with an approach that makes it possible to

say YES in response to it. Which is exactly what makes the Federal Bureau of Investigation and others who have attacked him so hostile.

It's no coincidence that our enemies call us a "cult." (That's why they call any group of people who don't go along with their psychology and who have managed to avoid being destroyed or drugged into obedience, as a punishment.) The "cult label is meant to scare people away from any challenge to the psychology of individualism, which is failing to reach millions of our children and driving millions of people to drink and to drugs (of the legal and illegal variety).

You see, if we aren't a "cult," and if Dr. Newman isn't a "guru" who forces people into "blind obedience," then something else must be going on. That something else is the possibility (to the powers-that-be) possibility that millions of people in this country (and around the world) might be highly responsive to the new psychology that Dr. Newman, I and our colleagues are creating.

MHCCD Foundation Seeks Items For Annual Auction And Dinner

Volunteer solicitation teams are hard at work trying to gather a record \$175,000 in merchandise, vacations and services to put on the auction block at the 22nd Annual Mt. Hood Community College District Foundation Auction and Dinner. The event--the Foundation's single largest fundraiser of the year--will be held March

12 at the Portland Hilton. Over \$25,000 worth of items have been donated since the auction solicitation kick-off Oct. 18. Items include an automobile donated by Jim Weston Pontiac, custom-built golf clubs from Jack Beaudoin's Golf Club, a microwave oven and VCR from First Interstate Bank, and Alaskan fishing trip

from Gary Nichols and a wingback chair from Lang's Rose City Upholstery. Items to be donated should call Karen Hosea, Foundation coordinator, at 667-7206.

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:
Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

I am writing you concerning an "Youth Initiative" event sponsored by Oregon Governors' School for Citizen Leadership that happened Saturday, December 4, 1993. Between 25-30 high school students from around the Portland area will be working along with 10-15 Reed college students to construct a playground for children who are learning disabled because they were born addicted to drugs.

These students will be working from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday the 4th at the Imani Women's Support Project at 5037 NE 16th Ave (corner of 16th and NE Alberta). If necessary you can call Shafia Monroe

at Project at 284-3965 for more information regarding the Imani Women's Support Project.

Oregon Governors' School is a private non-profit organization aimed at developing leadership and citizenship in the state's young people. The high school participants represent a cross-section of the state in terms of geographic, demographic, socioeconomic and ethnic characteristics. One of our projects is to sponsor "Youth Initiatives" which are regional groups that meet monthly to receive more leadership training, to participate in group community service, and to share with each other how the individual community service projects that they

have started are going. The students would love for more people to be involved in these Youth Initiatives and, thus, would truly appreciate any media attention you can give them. Youth Initiatives are part of a national youth movement dedicated to community service and citizen leadership, please help us to involve more people from Oregon.

If you would like to know more about Oregon Governors' School for Citizen Leadership please feel free to contact me at our office (222-5559). Thank you in advance for your support.

Megan Voorhees
Youth Initiative Coordinator
Oregon Governors' School

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Thanks for the great series on Legal Aid. Here are a few experiences on garnishment.

As you say you get a notice about your creditors action. But unless you have money for a lawyer or time and talent to figure out how to "file a legal response", They Won't Even Tell You A Time Of The Court Action. Your creditor chooses anytime he wants.

The other advantage the creditor is given is against your boss. If he

makes the slightest mistake in sending the garnishment to your creditor every week, He Is Responsible For Your Whole Debt. So he wants to fire you as soon as he gets the notice from court. He's going to say there's no work for you.

How can you prove he's really firing you illegally?

Run; get some credit counselling help!

JIM ANDERSON



Celebrate Diversity

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