

# EDITORIAL

**The African-American family in the United States loses a child every four hours to a bullet.**

Many more are injured or traumatized by needless exposure to violence and homicide. A young person under age eighteen is twice as likely as an adult to be victimized by the complex cycle of violence today. In this sense, we have, as a community, abandoned our youth. We have left them in harms way. We must Reclaim Our Youth, reaffirm their value to us, and reconnect ourselves to them in meaningful ways. It is up to us to move our children out of harm's way. In the words of Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, founder of the Rainbow National Reclaim Our Youth Crusade, "To choose to reclaim our youth is to choose to redeem the soul of America."

The mission of the Rainbow National Reclaim Our Youth Crusade is to reverse the rising tide of violence and homicide among today's youth. The strategy is to use our organizing and coalition building capabilities to generate new partnerships which serve as a "literal basket

## NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### Reclaim Your Youth

of support" within communities across the nation. We are mobilizing leadership cadres during weekly prayer breakfast meetings. Representatives from churches and the faith community are providing the foundation for building Reclaim Our Youth Coalitions in several cities. These spiritual leaders are creating unprecedented partnerships with the courts and judicial community. The "black robe" team works along with educators, social workers, lawyers, elected officials, health professionals, parents, colleges and youth to achieve specific reclaim youth goals in five key areas: (1) Parent/School Bonding; (2) Adult/Youth Mentoring/Nurturing; (3) Youth Policy Advocacy; (4) Youth/Student Empow-

erment; and (5) Media Involvement and Accountability.

We now seek to mobilize 100 churches within cities and communities across the country to increase the number of mentoring, nurturing and coaching relationships for our young people and their families. We know we can stop this epidemic of violence. We can reverse this tide. Here are the basic steps to follow in your community.

1) Convene a town meeting/issues forum to address local concerns and explore the conditions, causes, costs and cures of violence. Involve a diverse team including teachers, students, judges, ministers, youth service workers, parents and human service workers.

2) Establish a diverse local steering committee to meet on a weekly basis for both strategic planning and community building.

4) Design local pilot initiatives in any or all of the five key areas and designate local organizations to administer them. Collaborate with and support existing programs that relate to the key components.

The Reclaim Our Youth pledge for excellence and against violence ask parents to commit to five key things: (1) take your child to school; (2) meet your child's teacher; (3) exchange phone numbers; (4) pickup report cards and monitor test scores; and (5) turn off the television for three hours of study time each night.

These pledges serve as a catalyst for organizing parents and communities around embracing and protecting our youth. Reverend Jackson views the epidemic of youth violence as an opportunity for us as a community to stand up and to take back our right to live free of fear, our inalienable right in the pursuit of happiness. In his words, "No one will (or can) save us, for us, but us."

## Civil Rights Journal

### To Be Or Not To Be: Haiti's Search For Democracy

By BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

**The story is still unfolding. The pictures are changing daily on our televisions and in our newspapers.**

As I write this we see American soldiers standing by and watching Haitian police beat civilians who are celebrating the presence of the Americans and the promised arrival of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. It's not a pretty picture. Americans, who are supposed to be in Haiti to uphold democracy, are allowing people to be beat to death.

What does it all mean? Why is the deposed President of Haiti voicing disapproval of the last-second agreement negotiated by President Jimmy Carter, General Colin Powell and Senator Sam Nunn? Why is Randall Robinson, President of TransAfrica who carried out a hunger strike earlier this year because of the administration's policy toward Haitian immigrants, also questioning the agreement? Those are only a few of the questions one might raise about the United States and Haiti.

The first problem is that for the sake of a peaceful occupation by American troops the U.S. has chosen to negotiate with the very persons who have taken the government over by a bloody coup, have killed their own country people, have allowed Haitian military and police to rape and torture their opposites and their families, have forced many of the democratically-elected members of Parliament to flee for their lives and have reneged on prior agreements to turn over their power. One must ask at what cost is this peaceful invasion?

Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, when reflecting on how the U.S. had supported the minority-white South African government, that the U.S. has penchant for choosing the wrong side. He was referring to the U.S. government's Cold War habit of supporting despots. While there is some hope in that we seem to be supporting President Aristide, our negotiations with the Haitian military make it appear we haven't learned our lesson yet.

Just last week President Clinton called these same people

"dictators... (who) control the most violent regime in our hemisphere." These are the same people who this week we are to believe will act honorably and will quietly turn over the reigns of power. These are the same people whose armed thugs only weeks ago killed a Catholic priest and close friend of President Aristide and who will receive amnesty under the agreement. Somehow, even for those who believe in transformation and in miracles, all that is hard to swallow.

The second problem is that through this agreement we face the very real possibility of the U.S. becoming an occupying army in Haiti. A few months ago I wrote a column against the possible invasion of Haiti and part of that concern involved my fear that rather than being the liberators of the Haitian people, we would become their oppressors. If there are too many more times when U.S. soldiers stand powerless to help people being beaten by Haitian police, it won't take long for the people to hate the army which ostensibly came to free them.

The third problem is the amnesty being promised to all in Haiti.

The head of Amnesty International, the independent human rights organization, has criticized the agreement, saying it allows killers to go free. Under this agreement, for example, those who raped and tortured the wives of political opponents to the military will go free.

Finally, this agreement does not disarm the military leaders or their armed thugs. When the corrupt Duvalier government finally was forced to leave power in Haiti the vicious underground security force was not disarmed and continued to torture and kill Haitian people. These same armed thugs caused U.S. naval ships sent to Haiti a few months ago to turn back at the docks.

The reality is that this agreement may have saved the U.S. armed forces from invading Haiti, but it may not have saved the Haitian people. In the words of one American soldier in Haiti, while he was watching the Haitian police chase and beat those people who had come to thank our soldiers for coming to their country, "These people have a right to be free, they chose to be free. It's a shame, a shame."

## perspectives

### Immigration: Race, Money And Power (Conclusion)

**Before proceeding further with this commentary I wish to advise those teachers who say they are incorporating material in this series into social science lesson plans-- that in addition to the citations I give here (most in my library), you will find tremendous resources under the "Immigration" heading of Gale's Encyclopedia of Association at the Public Library.**

A most interesting volume from my own collection on the subject is "The Mismeasure Of Man" by Stephen Jay



By Professor Mckinley Burt

Gould. His cogent comments on the American racism which had argued for the exclusion of southern and eastern European immigrants who had scored poorly on supposed tests of innate intelligence, provide excellent points for an examination of U.S. policy on immigration. These range from earlier "cranial sizes" to the racial strategy of "biological determinism" and the misdeeds of Jensen and Shockley (The IQ comedians).

My point of departure for the thinking underlying this series was an observation derived from inspection of a number of viewpoints made by blacks in the national African American press. It would seem that whereas heretofore there has been a reticence (at least publically) to speak alarmingly about the increased immigration of other ethnics, there is now a growing concern about the economic impact. In other words, it is no longer considered 'politically incorrect' by many blacks to have second thoughts about "rainbow coalitions". They seem to be focusing a critical analysis on movements which are saying "we are all in this together (we outsiders)--and we should not be found examining our intracultural relationships. Stand united against that WASP world, you minorities and poor whites".

Instead these blacks are perceiving a real or imagined escalation of an unequal 'division-of-spoils' in the ethnic pot. It was Ben Halpern (Jews and Blacks) who was quoted in the introduction of "The Rise Of

The Unmeltable Ethnics" by Michael Novak: "Not only the general public but American Social Scientists, who pride themselves on fact-finding and objectivity, preferred to avoid the suggestion of 'unequal' rights in the word 'minority'". This was back in 1973 and Novak, of course, was not speaking of a "rainbow" mix of ethnics.

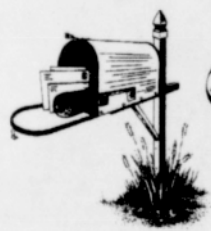
His "Unmeltable" pot, all supposedly in pursuit of and closing in on a "WASP" ideal (White Anglo Saxon Protestant)

were the Poles, Italians, Greeks, Slavs, Irish and Jews. At this time and place, Novak refers to an observer

"outside the usual conflicts between WASPs, ethnics and blacks". The African American, himself, cannot of course afford the luxury and possible objectivity of standing clear of the rush of events that are upon him. As the job market is shrink-wrapped by daily corporate layoffs and the closing of the small supporting businesses, blacks further perceive that the economic avenues are further curtailed by concentration of Asian ethnics in what were traditional opportunities for them; small stores, dry cleaners, janitorial services, car washes, beauty supply, etc.

It seems to me that what blacks are saying in many of the articles I read is "has our leadership failed us again? Earlier, we had them projecting all the employment gains we were to make through the implementation of "Affirmative Action--only to find that 80% of the jobs and promotions to be generated were absorbed by white females" (the most ubiquitous "ethnic" group ever created).

Now, when you consider these facts and then attempt to align the U.S. government's new "categoric of racial and ethnic designations to be used by every federal agency from Census Bureau, Equal Employment, Equal Credit Opportunity, etc. to Small Business programs and Banking legislation" with prior concepts of culturally-weighted realities of this land of ours, you could be in big trouble. Does the African American need to stand clear of all the see thing "melting pots" and review his options, his leaders, his organizations? Whats the future?



## Letter To The Editor

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

### An Open Letter To Parents

By RICHARD W. RILEY, U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

**Very few things are more important to our children's future or to America's future than the quality education of our children.**

We believe that the concerted efforts of entire communities to create and sustain disciplined learning environments, where our children can be challenged to meet high academic and occupational skill standards, are what will provide our children -- and America -- with a strong future.

All across America, there are communities which are pulling together to strengthen education. Parents, teachers, community leaders, business leaders, and educators in every part of our country are starting to work together to improve teaching and learning and to improve student achievement.

With passage last spring of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (by a strong bipartisan vote in Congress), new opportunities have been created for schools and neighborhoods, themselves, to accelerate local and state improvement efforts. But these opportunities for educational excellence can only be taken advantage of through greater family involvement in children's education -- both at school and at home.

I believe that all parents, regardless of income or occupation, have the capacity and the obligation to teach their children not only a love of learning, but also other critical American values such as responsibility, respect and hard work. Research shows that all families, whatever their income or education level, can take concrete steps that significantly help children learn. And yet families are often the missing link in American education.

Many parent, education, community and religious organizations are coming together to promote greater family involvement in learning, and I, as the U.S. Secretary of Education, encourage such efforts right at home -- in every neighborhood and community. As we work to increase strong family-school partnerships, we all need to be mindful of the pressures parents face and the escalating demands on their time. But I believe we, as a nation, must recognize something else as well: parents, when they can, need to slow down their lives and help their children grow.

As I travel around the country, I meet many parents who are trying hard to do the right thing for their children. They are being responsible, juggling jobs, trying to squeeze more hours into the day. They are worrying about their children's safety and doing all they can to keep their fami-

lies together.

Yet, some 40 percent of parents themselves believe they are not devoting enough time to their children's education. Almost three-quarters of students between the ages of 10 and 13 say they would like to talk to their parents more about schoolwork. A survey taken last year showed that teachers believe the most important issue in educational policy is strengthening the role of parents in children's schooling.

And data compiled by the National Assessment of Education Progress shows that three factors over which parents exercise authority -- student absenteeism, variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching -- explain nearly 90 percent of the variation in eighth grade mathematics test scores among 37 states and the District of Columbia.

Successful family involvement is not a sporadic activity. It is a sustained commitment to instill the habits of learning and to set high expectations.

Parents are children's first and most influential teachers. By reading to children or having them read to us... by making sure homework is done... by monitoring television use... by knowing how children spend their time, parents can have a powerfully positive effect on their children's learning.

Parents can also help children by participating in local and state efforts to raise educational standards. And we can urge schools to offer and enroll many more students in the challenging courses which prepare them for postsecondary education and/or a promising occupation.

At the same time, we know that the responsibility for expanding and deepening family involvement extends well beyond families. Schools, communities, and businesses can all be part of a network of support for families and students.

Schools can reach out to families at convenient hours and promote family and community involvement in helping all students to teach high standards. Communities can help to make schools safe and drug-free, provide support services for parents, and encourage volunteers to serve as mentors. Businesses can adopt "family-friendly" policies, such as child care or flexible leave, that would make it easier for parents to visit or volunteer in schools.

We have joined with more than 45 different organizations, and together we are identifying successful approaches to strengthen family involvement in learning.

Working together, we can reinforce the central role of the family in education -- and bring out the best in every child. We need your help.

## The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680)

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION  
Established in 1970 by Alfred L. Henderson

Joyce Washington--Publisher  
The PORTLAND OBSERVER is located at  
4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Portland, Oregon 97211  
503-288-0033 \* Fax 503-288-0015

Deadline for all submitted materials:

Articles: Friday, 5:00 pm Ads: Monday Noon

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

Second Class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

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 design display ads become the sole property of the 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. © 1994 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

Subscriptions: \$30.00 per year.

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, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association • Serving Portland and Vancouver