

EDITORIAL

The realities of Black America are almost invisible on PBS, the one network with a public...

mandate, expressed by the Carnegie Commission for Public Television in 1967: (1) to "help us see America whole, in all its diversity"; (2) to serve "as a forum for controversy and debate"; and (3) to "provide a voice for groups in the community that may otherwise be unheard."

In its entire history, PBS has never lived up to that mandate... especially where America's minorities are concerned. "Eyes on the Prize" and "I'll Fly Away" clearly show that quality programming about minority concerns is possible at PBS -- but only when dealing with the past. PBS currently carries one program addressing issues of the Black community, "Tony Brown's Journal." While this (well produced) show should have its voice (and views), should this be the only consistent programming on PBS dealing with issues concerning the Black community?

PBS has along history of rejecting programs that address issues of particular concern to the Black community -- that can also serve to educate and inform the rest of America. For instance:

"The Making of Sun City," 1986. Winner of the IDA (International Documentary Association) Annual Award about making the anti-apartheid hit record "Sun City." PBS claimed it was really an advertisement for the 56 musicians who volunteered their time, talent and reputation for this project. Just one month later, PBS bought and aired "The Making of Raiders of the Lost Ark," about making one of Hollywood's all-time money-makers.

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

The Invisible Person At PBS Blackout On Black America

"South Africa Now," 1988. When South Africa's apartheid government used press censorship to shut down worldwide coverage of the freedom struggle. South Africa Now stepped up to fill the information gap. PBS refused to fund or distribute this program, in effect, aiding the apartheid government in its war against truth and justice.

"Mandela in America," 1991. An award-winning documentary covering Mandela's historic visits in Boston, New York, Washington, DC, Atlanta and Los Angeles in 1990. Connections between racism in South Africa and racism in America were not cosmetically concealed.

This pattern of exclusion continues unabated today. Among the missing are:

"Rights & Wrongs" -- The only regular TV series in the world that focuses on human rights. It is hosted by 16-year PBS veteran Charlayne Hunter-Gault. According to the LA Times (July 31, 1994), PBS claims that "human rights alone is 'an insufficient organizing principle' for a PBS series." You can see it in South Africa, but not on PBS.

"Street Life" -- A newsmagazine covering national and international news from an African-American perspective. Producer Delmarie Cobb has been told privately by PBS insiders that her show is "too Black." (Delmarie Cobb was Jesse Jackson's press secretary for his 1988 presidential campaign).

"The Fire This Time" -- A documentary tracing the roots of the 1992 uprising (around Rodney King) back to FBI and police sabotage of community empowerment programs -- programs organized by the Black Panther Party and other community activists in response to the Watts Riot. PBS claimed it "already covered" the uprising in one 90-minute documentary on "Frontline" that never mentioned the issues explored in this film.

"Passin' It On" -- A documentary about Black Panther leader Doruba Bin Wahid, including the real political program of the Panthers in the 1960s, the police-state war against the Panthers that put him in jail for 19 years, and the struggle that eventually freed him to pass the torch to a new generation. It

was rejected by PBS for prime-time public affairs broadcast, and eventually shown in the summer schedule of "P.O.V.," the underfunded series pejoratively labeled as possessing a "Point Of View," in contrast to PBS's "objective programming."

Finally, there are programs whose concerns disproportionately affect minority communities: "We Do The Work" -- a half-hour monthly program focusing on the lives of American workers, and "America's Defense Monitor" -- a broad-minded approach to national security that actually includes people's well-being. With Cold War military budgets largely intact, as our inner cities continue to decay, this show is a must -- and PBS is a bust.

But invisibility is not total. In the adding-insult-to-injury department: PBS has just spent \$1.5 million to produce a full season of "Think Twice," a half-hour quiz show. The "good news" for minorities? As reported by the New York Times (September 12, 1994), its host is a Black stand-up comic, hired "in an effort to add cultural diversity" to PBS programming.

Media Fight: This has been printed as a background and in preparation for Direct Action to be taken by the Rainbow Coalition (and others) against PBS if they do not change their employment and opportunities policies. If you are interested in organizing a Direct Action campaign around the media in your community please contact Pierre R. Barollette at the NRC at 202-728-1180. We want to identify Rainbow activists and organizers in 75-to-100 cities, educate them with our six step process, coordinate our efforts, and Act Together with pickets on a certain date.

perspectives Winners And Losers In The Education Game II

The education establishment seems to be in a neck-and-neck race with the nation's industry to see which can accomplish the fastest and the 'mostest' "restructuring". In the school house this is referred to as "reform".

In the minds of many Americans, both trends are an indication that the system is well on its way to down-



By
Professor
Mckinley
Burt

scaling the delivery of both an education and job product. So well developed are these trends that the euphemisms have become standardized; for the teaching profession the buzzword is "reform", and for industry, the bad news is "restructuring". In either case the result would seem to be less of a good thing--much less.

Now, like most of us, it really hurts me to be taken for a fool; especially if it is an area where one has achieved a recognized degree of experience and expertise -- in the particular case, accounting, public and industrial. Several industry figures and editorial writers have been pontificating on the well being of the American economy and no less on the comfortable wages paid the employers. This is nothing more than smoke and mirrors when, actually, 'real' wages have shrunk almost 10 percent in the last twenty years; that is, measured in terms of 1974 buying power.

This state of affairs is reflected by the government's most recent figures on the economic state of a goodly part of our populace: 39.3 million of us live below the poverty level. That is 15.1 percent of all Americans. Could there be some relationship here between the shrinking of jobs and purchasing power on the one hand (standard of living), and the current and accelerating rapprochement of education with industry--described as "reform". I encounter them at the Association of Oregon, Industries.

Why else would they be describing such tactics as "blending academics with new vocational paths that lead to further studies and good jobs", or "Students taking 'Authentic Routes To Success'" (Whatever happened to the role of the Community Colleges). Looking at one of those frequently displayed 'School Reform Timelines' I am reminded that the good state of

Oregon is still being promised "the best educated citizens in the nation by Year 2000". Since this announcement is usually preceded by one about the issue of "Certificates of Advanced Mastery", one cannot help but wonder if the schools themselves have been issued a "Certificate in Advanced Puffery".

Just as recently as the late 1980s, the educational establishment and the media were all agog over two highly acclaimed additions to the pedagogic literature. First, Allan Bloom's Closing Of The American Mind (Simon & Schuster), where Bloom is said to speak "provocatively and wickedly on such subjects as 'cultural relativism'" Second, we had E.D. Hirsh, Jr's Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know (Vintage Books), "Skill as knowledge and knowledge as skill". In other words that cognitive function needs to draw from a full deck of 'bicycle's.

It's been exactly 20 years since I headed the Minority Teachers Organization and scared off a timid rank and file by trying to mount a law suit against the Portland School District--for failure to deliver the promised educational product. This was successfully done by parents and disaffected teachers in Washington D.C. (Hobso vs Board Of Education; I had visited him and returned with all the data, briefs and exhibits). Often our bravest-talking 'revolutionists' and activists bug out when it comes to challenging 'the man' in a realistic fashion; "I didn't really mean it boss, that was just for television--please don't cut me off for life, I got to educate my kids, massa".

I'm still asking the educational system "what is your real problem", as if I didn't know. "I lift my segregated southern high school circa 1939 which had a curriculum that would have satisfied either Mr. Bloom or Mr. Hirsch: Black, white, green, grey, or grizzle those Germans mandated four-year sequences, General Mathematics, Algebra I & II, Geometry I & II, Advanced Functions if you were bright; General Science I & II Biology I & II, Physics I & II, Chemistry I & II; English & Literature all the way through, Social Sciences the same; choice of Latin or French, Choir or Glee Club and, of course, Gym. I didn't know there was any other kind of high school until I got to Oregon in 1943.

Fulani: The Haiti Invasion

On the first day of the Clinton administration's "invasion" of Haiti, U.S. troops stood by while the goons of the military dictator Lieut. General Raoul Cedras beat to death demonstrators.

BY DR. LENORA FULANI

A week later, the New York Times reported that police broke up another pro-democracy demonstration "with clubs and rifle butts... Four men were seen being dragged away and a pregnant woman was knocked

to the ground and kicked in the stomach." Photos in our newspapers show U.S. brass co-mingling with the very same Haitian military bigwigs they were supposedly sent to overthrow. This is nothing new. The ties between the U.S. government and the Haitian military go back decades.

Despite a constant undermining of the democratic process, the Haitian people have demonstrated in extraordinary dedication to the cause of democracy -- a dedication that has resulted in significant victories against enormous odds. Through strikes, demonstrations and other overwhelming displays of the popular will, the Haitians have, over the past eight years, deposed the 30-year-old dictatorship of the Duvaliers, and the military regimes of General Henri Namphy and General Prosper Avril.

In 1990 a similar lavalas or "avalanche" of support swept the people's priest, Father Aristide, into office in the fairest election in Haitian history. But each victory for democracy won by the Haitian people has been subtly

and not so subtly undermined by the U.S. government's equivocal policies toward the democratic forces and its quite unequivocal and long-standing connections to the Haitian military elite.

A similar crisis during the preparation for the 1990 election, which eventually resulted in Father Aristide's The removal of the military must come with a public accounting of our government's complicity with the dictatorship throughout most of this century.

Letters To The Editor

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

Mental Health Care Inadequate

The problem with the mentally ill people on our streets is not due to the lack of adequate funding for psychiatric programs.

The reason I say this that the psychiatric industry is dumping their failures on the streets and blaming the lack of funding for their failures rather than their own inability to

handle the human mind. Since the early 1960s the psychiatric industry has been allocated billions of dollars in federal funds, over 18 billion in 1993 alone. During this time the problems with the mentally ill have only seemed to get worse.

The woman that was shot in the Gresham Fred Meyer Store had been in a mental ward in Providence Medical Center four times in the 10 days

prior to her death. You would think that if psychiatrists were really doing anything that was benefiting people this woman would have been getting better. It seems pretty obvious that she was only getting worse. Which just proves my point that if the psychiatric industry knew anything about the human mind and were able to cure people, there would be fewer mentally ill on our streets not more.

I think that the dumping of psychiatric failures onto the streets of our fine city is a travesty that must cease. We must look very closely into cleaning up the field of mental healing and find a viable way of handling the mentally ill and I don't think subjecting them to damaging "treatments" is the answer.

Scott Sulak
Portland

Wages For Skilled Workers Not Higher Profits

During the past 15 years I've learned a lot about public works projects and the wages paid on them, having served as director of research for Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries and now as an attorney in private practice.

The cost of labor on construction jobs is frequently 15-20 percent of the total cost. By requiring all employers to pay prevailing wage, competition for work is based on management efficiency, supply acquisition, overhead, and profit margin -- not on who can pay the cheapest wages to construction workers.

Construction workers don't work year-round, they work from job to job and are frequently unemployed. The higher the wages paid to them help make up for frequent periods of

unemployment. I would rather see my tax dollars go to worker wages than to employers who usually invest their profits and retirement money in ways that don't help the Oregon economy. I know that most construction workers spend their wages on goods and services in their home communities, thus helping their local economy. Also, these workers are all paying taxes on the wages they receive.

Prevailing wage laws protect skilled workers and provide them with the opportunity to earn a decent living.

Repeal of these laws does nothing more than help management carve out a reduction in labor costs -- and substantially increase profit margins.

Sincerely,
Norman D. Malbin
Attorney

The African-American community has been under siege by different factions of the criminal element (inside/outside) and criminal justice system. As a community, we have the responsibility to say "Enough is enough" and take action to help change the criminal justice system.

On October 1, 1994, "The Black Law Students Association held its 1994 BLSA North West Regional Job Fair at the Portland Conference Center, Portland, Oregon. There were over 30+ minority law students in attendance (from Lewis and Clark College, Oregon State, University of Oregon etc.) and these students were very impressive and articulate. They would make an excellent addition to any law firm in the Pacific North West. These future

lawyers can offer positive role models to African-American youth as they strive to be the best in their chosen law specialty. Also in attendance were 17 top law firms and governmental legal departments.

This was a very impressive and well attended job fair for all!! As a community, this forum provides

an opportunity to hire a potential 20 new minority lawyers and keep them in the Pacific North West. As the Guest Host

Sponsor, I strongly salute the efforts of local BLSA President, fellow students, colleges, and law firms in this venture to stop the migration of minority lawyer candidates from the Pacific North West.

Sincerely,
James L. Moore, DWP/Employment Outreach Coordinator
Urban League of Portland

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