

Council Heads Issue Opposition Statement—DHA

Following is a statement released this week by the Council Presidents of the Durham Housing Authority:

"As Representatives of Durham's Housing organizations, we are disappointed and frustrated with actions taken in today's [May 29] Durham Housing Authority Commissioners meeting. Although tenants voiced their opinions, and those of their councils, they were ignored by Commissioners. The action taken by these Commissioners to de-recognize the existing City-Wide Tenant Organizations were deplorable and unjustified. We are clearly against the expressed desires of the majority of the positions taken by these DHA Commissioners which suggest that they know what is better for tenants than tenants themselves.

"We are also amazed that the majority of the Commissioners failed to even attempt to express to tenants justification for their vote even though tenants gave long and numerous explanations for their stated positions.

"Today's action [taken in the May 29th meeting] made clear to tenants how the Housing Authority Commissioners and administration actually manipulate tenant-oriented issues. This is not the end. We will continue to meet and further actions will take place."

Affirmative Action

Janet Cooke And The Full Court Press

By Gerald C. Horne, Esquire

The dust has settled and perhaps it is now an appropriate time to look back soberly on the now notorious "Janet Cooke Affair." For those who may not be aware, Janet Cooke was a journalist with the *Washington Post* who recently became the first black woman to win the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for her fall 1980 articles "Jimmy's World," which chronicled the story of an eight year old black junkie and drug addict. The only problem was that (1) it appears that the story was primarily a figment of Ms. Cooke's evidently vivid imagination and (2) it appears that Ms. Cooke's claimed academic credentials — she alleged attendance at both Vassar and the Sorbonne in Paris — were not in order. In fact, Ms. Cooke's finely woven tale began to unravel when officials at Vassar College called the *Post* to inform them that she was not a graduate.

This movie-like scenario should concern all affirmative action advocates because it has been used to call into question the credentials and capabilities of not only black journalists but black professionals generally. As one waggish observer cracked, "You better put your diplomas and certificates on the wall of your office now before they begin to challenge you." Witting and unwitting racists have used the "Cooke Affair" as a crude weapon to bludgeon the affirmative action thrust by alleging that efforts to increase black participation inevitably lead to fiascos.

This is vicious, unalloyed racism because the attempt by John Hinckley to commit the dastardly act of assassinating the President of the United States did not cause a similar outcry of challenge against the capabilities of white sons of right-wing oil executives. Imagine the lynch mob spirit that would have arisen if the attempt to slay Reagan had been done by a black! Similarly, as baseball players union chief Marvin Miller has noted, some fans scream bloody murder about the salary of a Reggie Jackson but remain mute about the mega-bucks of a white star like Pete Rose. The fact is that the double standard — judging blacks detrimentally by one standard and whites by another — is a tell-tale sign of racism.

In that light it will be interesting to see how another brewing scandal involving a white journalist is handled. The *New York Daily News* has the largest circulation of any newspaper in the country. Recently one of their star white journalists, Michael Daly, was charged with fabricating a story during a recent visit to politically charged Northern Ireland. The *London Daily Mail* termed his piece about Irish youth attacking British troops with gasoline bombs with the latter retaliating with live ammunition "a work of pure imagination. . . a malevolent piece of propaganda which is a disgrace to journalists." Daly quickly resigned after these revelations hit the newstands. Let's see if this disgrace will call into question the credentials and capabilities of white male journalists. If the history of racism in this country is any guide, this definitely will not occur.

And what about Teresa Carpenter? She's the white woman journalist who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize after it was snatched from Cooke. Now the Associated Press reports that James A. Wechsler, a *New York Post* columnist, has filed a complaint with the National News Council about Ms. Carpenter's prize winning article in the *Village Voice*. The complaint alleges that the article implied it was based on an interview with Dennis Sweeney, who killed former Congressman Allard K. Lowenstein, but was actually based on an interview with his attorney. Let's see if this scandal will call into question the credentials and capabilities of white female journalists — or if the prize will be snatched away.

The above is not the only evidence of the racism that permeates this affair. Why would the *Post's* editors believe a story about an eight year old black junkie anyway? Wouldn't the *Post* editors have demanded more evidence if there had been allegations about an eight year old white junkie?

And what about the controversy surrounding Roger Wilkins, nephew of Roy Wilkins and member of the leading body that awarded the Pulitzer Prize? It was inevitable that Wilkins would be charged with hanky-panky

and favoritism toward Cooke, an attractive, vivacious "brown bombshell." It turns out that Wilkins did not lobby for Cooke but for another white journalist to receive the prize. With typical blindness, the racist critics passed over this evidence in their haste to launch anti-black missiles.

But it should be obvious why racism has reared its ugly head in the Janet Cooke Affair. For like the thief that yells "stop thief!" the nation's press — which is virtually lily-white — has a material interest in conjuring up all sorts of red herrings to distract attention away from their lamentable affirmative action records. But for the thriving, lively black press, the number of Afro-American journalists standing in unemployment lines would be much larger than it already is.

Black employees at the *New York Daily News* have created a storm of protest about the horribly discriminatory treatment that has been accorded them. Black employees at the principal establishment organ *New York Times* recently settled a lawsuit in their favor that forces more affirmative action down the throat of their Board of Directors. Minority employees at the *Wall Street Journal* could hold a meeting in a phone booth. Twenty present and former reporters and other employees of the *Washington Star* have filed a suit against the paper charging it with racial and sexual discrimination in employment.

Of the estimated 40,000 journalists now working for white dailies, fewer than 1,000 are black. Two-thirds of the nation's 1,762 dailies still have not hired a single minority news professional. The American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation has closed down its journalism scholarship program for minority students. *Newsweek* has one black editor; *Time* magazine has none. Neither the Associated Press nor United Press International — which are the major sources of news for most people of this nation — has a single black among its editors and bureau chiefs. Of 1,200 accredited Washington newspaper correspondents, fewer than a dozen are black. More than 99% of all newspaper

editors are white.

Coverage of black affairs by the major lily-white press is worse. In New York City, for example, it has long been contended that though the city now has a black and Hispanic majority, one would never know it from reading the area's press — except for the black press, of course. "Ignorance is closer to the truth than prejudice," is often said. The nation's lily-white press has displayed both ignorance and prejudice when it comes to covering black affairs — and it is a close contest as to which approach has been further from the truth. Those on the trail-blazing "Freedom Rides" of the 1960's were castigated as "outside agitators." Today, blacks trying to dismantle the ugly edifice of apartheid in South Africa are labeled as "terrorists." So much for prejudice. On the other hand, they have ignored the massive outpouring of black anger and dissent against racism in this country, like the 100,000 strong march in Washington, D.C., on Martin Luther King's birthday; they have ignored the massive mobilizations against the murder of Atlanta's black youth, e.g., the May 25 manifestation in Washington. They have ignored the recent lobby for jobs on Capitol Hill that posed affirmative action as a primary issue. So much for ignorance.

Further, Janet Cooke objectively was forced to manufacture credentials because of (1) the racism that has barred blacks from the schools where they could get credentials and (2) the racism that permeates the hiring practices of the nation's lily-white press.

The Janet Cooke affair smacks of scandal. But let us be clear that the "scandal" involves not this solitary individual but the racist pattern and practices of yet another major United States institution.

Until more lawsuits — "a full court press" — and demonstrations are deployed against these flagrant violators of affirmative action laws, we will continue to be victims of their poison-tipped arrows of bigotry. The press should be pressed in (and all over) the courts until victories are wrung

It's Never Too Late To Learn At Durham Technical Institute

By Donald Alderman

Adults are more difficult to teach than young people. Although they have more life experiences and may be highly motivated to learn, they have many different roles and responsibilities with competing demands upon their time; adults may lack confidence in their ability to learn; and adults vary more from each other than young people do.

Despite the challenges and difficulties of teaching adults, the Adult Education Program at Durham Technical Institute is accomplishing the often rigorous task with flying colors. This is the situation, according to program director Ms. Xiome Boyce and several students who have completed the program.

Ms. Boyce, a Dominican Republic native, talks proudly of the program's success. She contributes the program's progress to "a fine staff and the very best instructors available."

The four-part program includes: English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult High School Diploma (AHSD), and General Education Development (GED), High School Equivalency.

The ESL program offers English studies to any non-English speaking person. Most of the students

are professionals who are studying or working in the U.S.

The ABE program offers instruction to participants from non-readers to the eighth grade level. These participants must be at least sixteen years of age.

The AHSD and GED programs offer high school diplomas and equivalents to drop-outs and persons who never attended school. The AHSD is a short term program designed for students lacking a few courses before being eligible to obtain a diploma. The GED allows persons to obtain a diploma equivalent starting with the grade last completed.

"At a time when you can't wash dishes without a diploma, the program is definitely a community asset," says Mike Perkins, an AHSD program graduate. Perkins and his wife, Linda, completed the program in less than one month. They talk openly about how the program has enhanced their employment opportunities, and how it has strengthened their marriage.

The AHSD, Mike says, allows for a very flexible schedule. "I wanted my diploma but I could not afford to stop work and go back to high school," he said. "This program allowed me to arrange my

studies around my work." The program allows students to work at their pace. "There is not any pressure on you or deadlines. You work as fast or as slow as you want," Mike says.

Since completing the AHSD courses, Mike has left a local drink company where he worked as a delivery salesman. He is currently a swing manager at a local fast food establishment. "That advancement would not have been possible without my diploma," he remarked.

Besides obtaining a diploma and advancing in the job market, the couple say their participation in the AHSD program has also strengthened their marriage. Linda explains that Mike is good in math subjects while she is good in verbal areas. "We were able to assist each other in our studies and as a result, we realized the importance of having a close relationship," Linda explains.

Mike plans to enroll in DTI's computer technology program this fall. Linda plans to attend also, but has decided upon a study area.

They credit their success to the "wonderful" instructors within the program. "They really take an interest in teaching adults," Mike says.

Ms. Boyce says the adult education program actually recruits many

students for the Institute. "Many students become interested in further studies once they have received their diploma. Once adults build confidence in themselves and realize that it is never too late for learning, they tend to be highly motivated, she said.

Age should not be a deterrent to gaining and education. Ms. Boyce says many persons in the AHSD and GED programs are "well past their primes." The age range, she says, is from 18 to 65 years.

Ms. Elizabeth Willis graduated from the GED course at age 56. She says being involved in the program was "a truly rewarding experience."

"I've been a nurses' aide for thirty years. I've always wanted to be a nurse. Now that I have my diploma, I have my chance. Ms. Willis said, while explaining how the program has enriched her life.

Ms. Willis plans to enroll in DTI's nursing program this fall. "I plan to go as far as my mind will allow me," she says. "I'm really excited and inspired by these marvelous teachers."

She says being able to attend nursing school at age 56 is "a dream come true." "My life and way of thinking has changed. If I live to be ninety, I will

never get old."

Besides the Lawson Street campus location, DTI's adult education program branches out into the Durham and Chapel Hill communities: warning drop-outs of the necessity of education; assisting the social and economically disadvantaged in advancing their state; reaching the illiterate and enabling them to function in a complex society; and, promoting the human cause by demonstrating self-determination through education.

"North Carolina has an alarming illiterate population. We try to reach these people with love and understanding," Ms. Boyce remarked.

Several housing projects, recreation centers, junior high schools, and churches are involved in the program. Housing projects participating are: Morreene Road, Oxford Manor, Liberty Street, Hoover Street, Few Gardens, and Cornwallis Courts.

Other Durham institutions involved in the program are: Duke University, Goodwill Industries, W.D. Hill Recreation Center, St. Joseph's Performing Arts Center, Carlington Junior High, Operation Breakthrough, Guess Road Prison and Hillhaven Rose Manor.

Chapel Hill participants are: University Methodist Church, Binkley Baptist Church, Trinity Lutheran

Church, Church of Reconciliation, Culbreth Junior High and Phillips Junior High.

The student population is said to be 60% black and 40% white.

An estimated 2,200 students were serviced during the 1980-81 summer, fall and winter quarters. This total does not include the 1981 spring quarter. Those figures have not been compiled since the quarter is just being completed.

"We are providing one of the greatest services available to the community," Ms. Boyce said. "It is never too late for anyone to decide to further their education, enhance their employment chances, and advance their socio-

economic state."

Indeed, in these modern times of high technology, every one needs to be literate. Those skills are the foundation upon which all further learning is based.

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SWAPO Head Visits Zimbabwe

Sam Nujoma, president of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) of Namibia, arrives in Salisbury, Zimbabwe at the start of Zimbabwe's Nami-

bian Solidarity Week. He is greet by Dr. Witness Mangwende, Minister of Foreign Affairs (right) and Joshua Nkomo (left), Minister Without Portfolio. UPI

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