

Editorials & Comments

To Be Equal Seek Excellence

By Hoyle Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

"The economic reality of most adult Blacks' lives is still more discouraging than that of whites and at virtually all income levels. This discouraging reality profoundly shapes Black children's skills and attitudes, including their skills and attitudes for learning.

"Even very young black children pick up discouraging but quite realistic messages about the comparatively poor payoff that education is likely to have for them. They live everyday surrounded by adults whose education is connected only dimly to their jobs, or who cannot find jobs at all."

As reported by the Associated Press this statement is from a Carnegie Council study on children prepared by John Ogbu, a Nigerian-born anthropologist and associate professor at the University of California at Berkeley. Ogbu contends that black students failures on STANDARDIZED...TESTS IS NOT STUPIDITY, NOR GENETIC FAILURES BUT "rather it is a functional adaptation to reality" While we applaud Ogbu's challenge to the suggestion that blacks are genetically inferior, we disagree strongly with his 'adaptation to reality' theory because it implies that blacks have abandoned all hope and have surrendered to the white racist forces that would deny them even the right to pursue equality of opportunity.

We prefer to follow the line of thinking of the National Urban League's Vernon Jordan who said early last year that while high unemployment, poor health care and crime are still plaguing black Americans, the dominant feeling among blacks today is hope."

U. S. Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall put Jordan's words into a clear perspective when he told the graduating class of Huston-Tillotson College last spring, "some of you will experience unemployment ... a terrible experience ... which you may never forget ... the important thing to remember is not to lose confidence in yourself and your potential. don't lose hope."

Ogbu's Observations

In order for blacks - both youths and adults - to have hope and in order to place the nature of Ogbu's observations in perspective, blacks must understand what has happened in public education over the past 12 to 14 years.

By way of background, and before the advent of so-called integrated education, at least in the quasi-liberal North, public education was

characterized as having dedicated teachers; economically, socially, racially, and at least semi-culturally integrated student bodies sufficiently motivated to the pursuit of knowledge; and school boards committed to quality education while being unintimidated by political ideologies or a preoccupation with personal political ambitions.

Last, but certainly not least, parents gave their wholehearted support to the educational system by encouraging discipline, participating in PTA activities that supported the learning process, and making homework a family learning experience.

However, today, some 14 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, American public education, primarily below the university level, is straining to carry the task of bringing about an integrated society while housing pater-

terns, the church, employment practices and most other institutions and practices in our society remain largely segregated.

Cope With Problems

This paradox, some knowledgeable experts believe, has created a near-catastrophe in public education. School boards cannot seem to cope with problems. Teachers are too often pre-occupied with joining unions, teaching only the quick learn-

ers and in general not interested in the students' needs. Furthermore, too many parents are often apathetic and favor "social promotion" which has dampened the motivation

of our youths to learn. Considering this state of affairs, is there any wonder that Dr. Ogbu has concluded that many black youths have embraced a "functional adaptation to reality."

Such an adaptation is a self-defeating surrender to the forces of racism and a form of genocide for black Americans. In order to escape this racial death, blacks must embrace Jesse Jackson's philosophical and practical 'Push For Excellence.

The pursuit of excellence means that in spite of racism, sexism or other road blocks to the better life, black youths will have such a de-

termination to succeed academically, economically and politically that the apathy and indifference of those who follow will be desolved into a hope that says I can, I will, I must and I shall succeed.

We can, in the final analysis, only be equal if we are individually and collectively in pursuit of excellence.



Rights Movement Is Not Weak

By Bayard Rustin

Recently a great deal of attention has been focused on the civil rights movement. According to many commentators its condition is far from healthy. An article in the New York Times talked about "murmurs of deep concern" for the future of the NAACP in the Black community. NAACP's national energy position, which broke with the stands of its traditional liberal and labor allies as well as with other civil rights organizations, provoked a storm of controversy that has not yet subsided. As a result, the movement seems disoriented and fragmented. Washington Post columnist William Raspberry recently wrote that the differences between the Carter administration and Blacks are not only large, but "may even be growing" and concluded that Blacks have little political leverage to gain results from the President. And another writer observed that "the movement is unsure of its tactics."

ALL IN ALL, a pretty discouraging picture. Yet, on examination, the portrayal of the civil rights movement as isolated, confused, weak, and ineffective is misleading. It exaggerates the difficulties, overlooks the achievements, and underestimates the strengths. There is no doubt that this is a time filled with challenges for the Black community. But without an accounting of the pluses, as well as the minuses, we cannot hope to understand, much less overcome, the formidable problems that do exist. It is too often forgotten that the difficulties facing the civil

rights movement today are largely the consequence of its successes. The elimination of racially discriminatory legislation and the introduction of anti-discriminatory programs has substantially altered the requirements for achieving racial equality. It is not simply that the issues have become more complicated. The change is actually much deeper and far-reaching. While there has always been an economic dimension to the civil rights agenda, today the central issue is no longer the elimination of racial discrimination, but of economic inequality. The task is to begin a process of economic progress not only to the "talented tenth," who have continued to make significant strides, but to the overwhelming majority of Blacks, who are increasingly falling behind.

THIS REQUIRES a transition from a movement for equal rights for an oppressed minority to a movement for social justice that encompasses the needs of a constituency far broader than just Blacks. Such a transition is inherently disruptive, painful, and awkward. Thus, it is most encouraging that the leadership of Black organizations recognizes that economic issues form the new agenda

for racial progress. That does not mean that there is agreement over the content of the economic agenda. Obviously, there are significant differences. But once the primacy of economics is fully understood, the possibilities for progress are immeasurably enhanced. The past year, despite its plentiful disappointments,

shows that this process of transition has considerable promise in addition to the often noted complications. Two developments in particular encourage the belief that the energy of the civil rights movement is far from exhausted. First, there was a growing practical unity and cooperation between Black organizations. Second, there has been a conscious solidification and strengthening of the ties between organized labor and civil rights community. This was demonstrated by the impressive support from the Black community for labor's legislative initiatives, particularly labor law reform, and labor's strengthened determination to organize the South. This reflects the spreading and correct perception that labor's programs for economic justice are essential to realizing the hopes and aspirations of millions of Black workers and their families.

TAKEN TOGETHER, These developments give a new impetus to the political dynamic that is our central hope for social progress and economic justice. The potential impact of this dynamic has already been demonstrated. In conjunction with labor and liberals, Blacks have been able to apply pressure to the Carter Administration with significant, though far from satisfactory, success.

What seems to be confusion and uncertainty in the civil rights community may emerge as the surface reflection of the creative process

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

TO BE EQUAL



Jobs—How High A Priority?

Just how high a priority the Administration and the Congress give to assuring jobs for all who want to work is in doubt.

The President unveiled his request for a continued public service jobs program recently, and while it contains many positive features it stops short of making full employment the nation's number one priority.

The Administration wants the public service jobs program extended to 1982, and for the first time is asking for a basic minimum public service jobs commitment. It wants at least 100,000 such jobs in each year through 1982, and would like the creation of more jobs to the unemployment rate.

The idea is that for each half a percentage point that unemployment goes over four and three-quarter percent of the work force, the government would create another 100,000 jobs. It makes sense to tie federal job creation levels to the unemployment rate, but the figures just don't add up. Right now, there are 725,000 public service jobs, but if the formula the Administration is asking for were in effect, it would mean only about 400,000 public service jobs.

So the plan to have a basic minimum of public jobs is good, as is the built-in escalator clause of increasing the numbers of those jobs as unemployment rises. But the formula doesn't provide anywhere near the numbers of jobs it should.

And that becomes even more apparent when we realize that the current level of 725,000 jobs is far from adequate. It provides work for only about a tenth of the unemployed.

The AFL-CIO has issued a call for sharply expanding the numbers of public service jobs. My own view is that doubling the number to about one-and-a-half million in the coming year would do a lot to alleviate unemployment and to improve public services at the local level.

But the Administration is only asking Congress to maintain the 725,000 level in the coming year - no increase at all. If that stance is based on the recent drop in unemployment rates, it's wrong. Black unemployment actually increased in 1977, while white joblessness fell. Without those public service jobs, black unemployment would have been even higher last year, just as it is bound to increase this year unless more vigorous action is taken.

One encouraging initiative in the President's job proposal is his plan for creating local Private Industry Councils to provide about 100,000 job training slots in the private sector.

Important as public employment is, especially in the short run, the private sector is where most of the jobs are, and it is there that much remains to be done. The Administration will foot much of the bill for the private sector job training - it's asking for \$400 million.

Private sector spokesmen have been eloquent in expressing their concern about involving private industry in job creation. Here's a chance for industry to show it can respond creatively to the challenge of training and employing the unskilled and the jobless.

The proposed job legislation, along with the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill, will determine whether the Congress is going to act responsibly to put the country on the road to full employment.

as i see it

Black Leaders Ought To Get It Together ?

By Gerald O. Johnson

Black politicians and leaders are belittling President Carter for not jumping on Black Unemployment.

Carter has been president for a year and half and they have been black all of their lives but what have they done? What have we done as black people to decrease the black unemployment?

Nothing! To show you how confused we are as a people, the very same people pushing for black employment, also supported the minimum wage and increased welfare packages. The two are in diametric opposition of each other, a fact I pointed out in an earlier article. Consequently, the voices of the black community are not knowledgeable of economical conditions as they relate to the country and to the black community. Moreover, few of those people echoing the feelings of the black community know anything about the black community at large.

My concern is the majority of black people unemployed lack marketable skills. It seems to me that the first step to employment is training. How can the president de-

crease unemployment among a class of people if they lack any skills. Reports will confirm that illiteracy like unemployment is high among Blacks. Hence our focus must be on educating the mass of black people, then we can concentrate on employment. Until such time a large portion of the black community will be unemployed if they aren't educated.

This problem of education has been compounded with integration. Integrated schools has the tendency to better prepare the gifted blacks but fails to prepare the marginal students. Consequently the marginal student lacks the motivation and the desire to excel in anything. Meanwhile the fight for integrated schools was spearheaded by those individuals with gifted children.

Marginal students fail because in an integrated environment they are overlooked. No one takes the time to try and motivate these students. An example is a little 9 year old fellow I know that is in the 2nd grade at a traditional school. The little fellow is hyper-active and his mother is on welfare. He has no father. The little fellow is on the service honor roll with



Gerald Johnson

such duties as cleaning the black board, sweeping, and arranging chairs. His white teacher fails to or is disinterested in the fact that with a little consideration and attention this young lad could become a genius. This type of attention he would have received in a segregated situation. But at the rate he is going, he will end up as a drop out and become another statistic. The boy's mother feels that the teacher resents her son because she is on welfare. She contends that she and the teacher have had numerous run-ins on petty problems involving monetary situations.

Though the education system on the whole is a failure, the integrated system has failed the masses of black people.

All of this should make you wonder if the people fighting for black causes know anything about black people, or are they using black people as a means to further their own ends.

At any rate it is a fact that as long as the economical power is controlled by a white society, the black citizenry must educate its own to cope in that society. The majority of black youngsters are not getting that kind of education in public or secondary schools.

I don't have the ready answers except to say that as black people we must strive to build a sense of achievement in the young.

As a youngster my parents, teachers, and minister stressed that black children had to be twice as good as our white counter-parts in order to have any kind of a chance. This principle stood out in my mind throughout my educational period (which was segregated until I reached graduate school). It was the central reason I worked very hard at my education. I don't think this stimulus exist in current integrated situations.

In closing, when I got my first job a chinese took me under his wing and taught me everything he knew about computers. He spent countless hours going over detailed information with me and whenever I erred he would ball me out. One day I asked Pu Shaing why was he doing all this for me and that one day I would know more than he knew. He smiled and said "That's why. With my help," he said, "you will eventually know much more than I do. This is how mankind makes progress." He continued "we would be failures if future generations were dumber than we are."

We must incorporate this philosophy in the black community.

Post' struggle for credibility The influence that the Charlotte Post has had on the white press is astounding. Before the Post started its active process of acquiring community news, the white local newspaper did absolutely nothing to include blacks in their paper. Now the white press is flooding its pages with black news and pictures to compete with the Post. What is more the white press has started an active campaign

to solicit black news. They have even sent letters to all of the black churches in an attempt to get their support. The church idea and the community concept of black news originated in this area with the Post. This is a clear indication that the Post has a positive influence on the community. We must be doing something right or the big boys on the block wouldn't be copying us.

The unfortunate thing about all of this is that the black community fails to realize the impact the Post has had on this community as a whole. Black institutions and social clubs rush to the Observer and News with ads and top stories. When they feel that they didn't

get top billing from the big boys then and only then do they run to the Post. But even then it is not with an ad. Ironically, U.N.C.C. sends more publicity to the Post than JCSU. During the C.I.A.A. Tournament the Charlotte Observer, News was the only daily paper not represented from the cities that had teams in the tournament. Yet, with such major mis-coverage by the daily press, blacks rush to be represented in this media.

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