

REGISTER

OR YOU WILL HAVE NO CHOICE



Good Teaching Begins With Public Support

By Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

Time magazine's June edition has made a lot of teachers very angry. Its cover story "Help! Teacher Can't Teach" emphasizes the idea that since ever since else has been blamed for the poor state of American education, it is now time for classroom teachers to take their lumps.

Time says that the focus is now being aimed at teachers because "it is easier for society to find someone to blame than to hold up a mirror and see that U.S. culture itself is largely responsible."

The plain fact is that teachers no longer can stand before their classes and just teach. Too many things are happening in today's classrooms for the simple rudiments of learning to take place.

Teachers must be part parent, part minister, part police officer, part play-mate, part judge, jury and executioner.

Failing in any one of these roles can be quite dangerous. So dangerous, in fact, that last year 110,000 teachers — 10 per cent of all the teachers in the U.S. — reported they were attacked by students, and nothing much happened to the attacking students — except for some polite wrist slapping, which too often fails to confront and resolve disruptive student behavior.

Whatever the ingredients of the classroom environment however, the charge is being made that teacher incompetence is at the base root of education's problems.

Teachers are being accused of not being able to read, to write, or to do simple arithmetic.

and this, say the critics, is why our children can't read, can't write or do simple arithmetic.

Is the accusation justified?

All the evidence is not in on this issue — and probably never will be — but as a result of the charges and counter charges, twelve states now have some form of teacher testing program in operation. And other states are

debating the question.

No one can argue that this society is not a vast, swiftly changing entity which runs so hot and cold on all matters of things that even the education of our children is not a sacred cow. We say we care about their learning — and yet we allow them to watch 18,000 hours of television before they are eighteen years of age.

Teachers are saying that TV watching, for example, has had a devastating impact on homework assignments — which have been cut in half between 1968-1977, according to a recent study on declining test scores in New York state. Homework is a learning reinforcement tool; without it the teacher's job becomes doubly difficult.

Teachers are also saying that as a society: — we are becoming too tolerant of student violence and vandalism

— we are ignoring the attitudes of defiant students who are disinterested in school and who prevent other students from learning

— we have allowed ourselves to be victimized by continually changing education theories

— we have allowed public and private bureaucracies too much control in the running of schools

— we have not been consistently supportive of the nation's public school systems.

It's easy to lay the blame on teachers for all the wrongs in our public schools.

But our public schools are not solely run by teachers, nor are teachers solely responsible for their running.

There are a lot of actors involved in the effort to educate our children: parents, government, taxpayers, and teachers.

It's going to take all of them working together to make the nation's schools the places of excellence they can be.

Nothing less than this will lead to the improving of the climate in which education can take place, and which will return the classroom to the teacher.

Things You Should Know

William S. B. BRAITHWAITE



BORN IN BOSTON, MASS., IN 1878,

HE LEFT SCHOOL AT THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER,

TO HELP SUPPORT HIS MOTHER / HE WAS COMPLETELY SELF-EDUCATED, YET BECAME LITER-

ARY CRITIC ON THE BOSTON TRANSCRIPT /

A RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY ON LITERATURE —

AND POETRY — HE AUTHORED MANY WIDELY-

READ BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON THE SUBJECTS /

HIS OWN POEMS, PUBLISHED AND SOLD ON

A NATION-WIDE SCALE, WON CONSIDERABLE

CLAIM /

Affirmative Action: Protest, Politics and Prosperity

By Gerald C. Horne, Esq.

It is no exaggeration, nor is it an insult to say that most books published in this country are a waste of trees. The literary equivalent of "junk food," people forget how awful their situation is.

But every so often there emerges a book with profound simplicity and cutting intelligence that distills the nature of an entire epoch. Such a book is *Protest, Politics and Prosperity: Black Americans and White Institutions, 1940-1975*.

This valuable work, which is published by Pantheon, was co-authored by a team of social scientists, headed by Dorothy K. Newman, who holds a doctorate in sociology from Yale and has toiled in the vineyards a number of years for the Urban League and Department of Labor.

The study's major conclusion is indelibly imbedded in its title; i.e., that whatever "prosperity" or social progress that has come to the black community in the last 35 years has come through the route of political protest. This clarion call for activism is not the product of wild-eyed radicals. Indeed, the study was funded in large part by the Carnegie Corporation — an organization not generally known for fire-brand anti-establishment politics.

But after an exhaustive sifting through the relevant data, the authors conclude that no other rationale will obtain. And it should be noted at the outset that this work is not an extended diatribe but a careful, documented analysis that contains over eighty tables dissecting the black condition in areas ranging from education to housing to health to welfare.

Their specific conclusions may prove unsettling to some and may outrage others. But the burden is on the detractors to overcome the mountain of statistics the authors deploy to hammer home their points. For example, they vigorously attack the notion that a primary cause for the historically high black unemployment rates are a lack of education and/or training. They conclude that, "only professional, technical and managerial jobs might require education beyond high school; in 1975 they were only one-fourth of all jobs." At the same time that employers rail at hiring blacks with less than a high school diploma, they have no compunction about hiring white similarly situated. "White workers without a high school diploma were about half the total labor force in 1950 and 1960 and one-third in 1970." Hence, they aver, it is simply wrong to say that blacks cannot find jobs because

of lack of education; the problem is that age-old United States verity — racism.

They do note that there are jobs that require training — e.g. electricians, machinists, plumbers, carpenters, etc. — but they quickly add that in such categories "learning the skill on the job is paramount." Moreover, noting the growing trend toward automation, use of robots, etc., they aver that jobs, if anything, require "less skill rather than more. . . . The skills are built into the machines."

Their overall conclusion is supported by the United States Department of Labor which has stated time and time again, "most jobs in industrial production do not require a high school diploma."

Then, why the castigating of "dropouts," especially when studies show that they often do as well as their diploma-laden counterparts? They infer that what else can a society, which cannot provide full employment do, but (a) urge youth to stay in school since there are no jobs, and (b) blame the victim — "you don't have a diploma" — when a job can't be found.

The final nail in the coffin is their data that show that many of the recherche' products from Western Europe that are so highly regarded — Spanish leather, Scandinavian furniture, German autos, etc. — are produced by workers with substantially less education than blacks.

Their analysis of employment patterns in the federal government is especially striking. They recall that until quite recently, the post office was virtually the only place where blacks could find government jobs. They observe that State, Agriculture, Interior, Justice (sic), Labor and Commerce had the most egregious records but virtually all departments railroaded blacks by confining them to menial tasks, confining them to segregated units, refusing to promote, requiring higher qualifications than whites, allowing them supervisory roles only over other blacks and employing restrictive hiring quotas. (Interestingly, some of those same forces that vociferously backed quotas that excluded blacks now scream bloody murder when affirmative action guidelines require quotas as a remedy to include blacks.)

Throughout, the authors laud the tactics that produced the climate for change — sit-ins, boycotts, freedom rides, picket lines, voter registration campaigns, work-site blockages, rallies, letter-writing campaigns, etc. Though they regard law suits as important, they feel that their importance has been

over-emphasized. Just as the firing on Fort Sumter was not "the cause" of the Civil War, the decisions of the Warren Court were not "the cause" for black progress. Both were merely chapters — some might say footnotes — in a much longer story. Desegregated inter-state bus travel was declared the law of the land in the late 1940's; but it took the freedom rides of the 1960's to make this decision a reality.

The point is underscored that opponents of black progress frequently "re-bait" aggressive tactics and call them "Communist inspired," just as freedom fighters in southern Africa are deemed to be "Soviet pawns." They observe "Time and time again, the NAACP was called on to defend black government workers accused of disloyalty after pressing for black rights." Indeed, the McCarthyite terror claimed a disproportionate number of blacks as victims. The case of the National Negro Labor Council, founded by such stalwarts as Coleman Young (now mayor Detroit) and Paul Robeson, is instructive. This group of black workers pushed aggressively during the 1950's for the signing of black baseball players, winning jobs in Brooklyn breweries, Louisville electrical appliance plants, San Francisco hotels, etc. But in 1956, it was forced to disband by the government which charged it with being a "Communist front," not having on hand the \$100,000 in legal fees and related expenses it would take to fight, NNLC disbanded.

Though academic, the authors point to useful pressure points for civil rights activists. For example, in the area of housing discrimination, they note that the Federal Reserve System, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the Comptroller of the Currency and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation all have the power to act against discriminatory lending practices. This fact needs to be broadcast further and housing activists, especially, should mount a campaign to force these agencies to enforce the law — something these agencies have been loath to do thus far.

Andrew Young commented recently, "You don't have to demonstrate when you can pick up a phone and call someone." But with all due respect to the former U.N. Ambassador, it is hard to square this with the lack of black progress of late and the dearth of black political power; in fact, at the rate blacks are currently being elected, they will still hold only three per cent of elective offices by the year 2000!!

Business Viewpoint: Congress And The Budget

By Richard M. DeVos and Jay VanAndel

It may shock you to learn that Congress has no say in how 75 per cent of this year's federal budget will be spent. That three-fourths of the budget is "called 'entitlements.'" These are programs which disburse, on demand, benefits or services authorized by past Congresses. They include countless commitments which, once enacted, are "set in stone," regardless of future costs.

Programs such as Social Security, some Veterans' benefits, unemployment assistance, Medicare, Medicaid, and others are in the entitlement category. While no one is suggesting that such programs be eliminated, spending associated with them

must be controlled, because at the present rate of growth, these open-ended programs will consume ninety per cent of the federal budget by the year 2000.

If Congress were to agree, today, to inflation remedies such as a balanced budget and spending limitation, essential reductions could be imposed on only 25 per cent of the outlays. This would mean severe cuts in controllable items such as defense, education, and even some poverty programs.

Up until now, Congress has been unwilling to do anything to limit or reduce the number of "blank check" programs. In fact, new ones are being initiated, and in-

terest groups lobby hard to protect existing programs.

Congress must be more than what Representative David Stockman calls "a green eye shaded disbursement officer who totes up the bill, writes the check, and then trundles off to mourn after the process is all over."

No new programs should be added in the entitlement category. Programs already in that category must be shifted back to the annual appropriations process. There, the efficiencies of the delivery system and merits and need for specific programs are subject to Congressional review. Fiscal responsibility is incompatible with blank check legislation.

Business In The Black: Billions By-Pass Black Entrepreneurs

By Charles E. Belle

Anybody who has ever been to the Big Apple knows it can be a sinful and sensuous city. How sweet suburbia must be for it is their indulgers who get hidden hand outs from the higher ups in the city hall.

Have just received word that "New York is a Purchasing Giant." No kidding! The bulletin says the big town "is now a billion dollar a year purchaser committed" no less than "to prompt payment." Placed boldly on the first page of their fire red worded pamphlet is the sentence, "We want you to be a part of this enterprise." This is News!

Minority-owned businesses in the U.S. received more than \$3 billion in orders for goods and services in 1979, according to the National Minority Supplier Development Council in New York founded in 1972 as the National Minority Purchasing Council, the organization provides sales training for minority entrepreneurs to increase their access to company buyers, and also holds seminars for buyers to make them aware of the services and products offered by minority businesses.

But why not cast down your bucket right here? Cities and companies are similar in their economic system. In order to perform a service, even sometime scarce governmental services, some product purchasing is

necessary. The need for the 10,000 plus minority-owned companies around the country, as compiled by the councils to descend upon their individual cities is critical in these cut back the budget days.

Before cities cut back, private companies will sharply curtail their "minority purchase plans." After all, there is a recession going on and companies run into bankruptcy faster than cities. No need to comment on "last hired, first fired" concept to black Americans.

The Minority Business Development Agency within the U.S. Commerce Department has allocated \$1.7 million annually to support the national Minority Purchasing Council's programs. Major cities and some states might make equal commitments for setting up local groups to get their hands on a larger percentage of a well established market — city and state procurements.

The City of New York has come out of the closet with an "open door policy" to discuss bids, awards, products and whatever else vendors wish to offer the city. The demonstrative thing they have not done is to decide how much business is to be directed to their minority citizens.

A critical question for black American entrepreneurs all over America. If all cities

procurement policies contained a specific requirement to reflect the ethnic pattern of its citizens for purchasing firms, big city unemployment would drop drastically overnight.

The crime is not in the big spending by the cities, but in the collection of billions of dollars annually from all, but dispensing a little dole to the many and multi-millions to the few through the funnel of primeval, precarious, preferential and prejudiced procurement practices.

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If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who propose to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without clouds and lightning. They want the oceans majestic waves without the awful roar of its waters.

— Frederick Douglass