

Benjamin L. Hooks

FCC
COMMISSIONER



Turning to the field of education for a moment: when I was a boy forty years ago, the approach to education was on a different level. In fact, it was downright authoritarian with the teacher making no bones about the fact that you were in school to learn to read, write, spell and work arithmetic and that it was his/her job to see that you did.

Learning was, of course, by the rote method, that is, you repeated your lessons over and over until they were committed to memory. Present-day educators, by and large, scoff at such methods, and perhaps rightly so. They say these are too slow, dull and worse, do not train a student to think independently in a world that is becoming increasingly complex, demanding facile and flexible approaches to solving of sophisticated and highly involved problems.

I know the arguments and they are indeed hard to deny. Yet something in me will not let the thought be put to rest that the old fashioned method of learning had something good going for it.

Today as I move about the country, I encounter young people in various walks of life and from many parts of the world. I am singularly struck by the facility with which, for example, young Africans trained in the authoritarian British method of rote learning and young Americans trained in Catholic schools where nuns are unswerving in exercising strict learning disciplines, handle the English language.

There is a direct correlation, it seems to me, between the ability to speak well, and one's ability to read and thus grasp wider ranging concepts and ideas.

There are certainly no easy answers. If there were the question would long since have been laid to rest. But my suspicion is that in an age when youngsters are called upon to learn and absorb so much more complex information that their fore-bears, the iron external discipline necessary to the fulfillment of the endeavor is giving away to laxity and a curious permissiveness. Spare the rod and spoil the child? Perhaps.

This is certainly true. When I was a youngster, a teacher would whack your knuckles with a ruler and warm the seat of your pants with a leather strap if you cut up in class and failed to get your lessons.

If you squawked, you got another licking from your parents when you got home. Today, I suppose a parent would have a teacher arrested for assault if he or she attempted to discipline a child with a whipping. Then, too, some communities have laws against corporal punishment.

Let me emphasize this point: I do not want to return to a physical disciplinary setting. At the same time, I do not believe we should be bamboozled by the phoney liberals who urge permissive learning for our public school system while they place their children in private schools, with the best teachers and materials and insist they learn to read, write, spell and solve arithmetic problems and do all these things well.

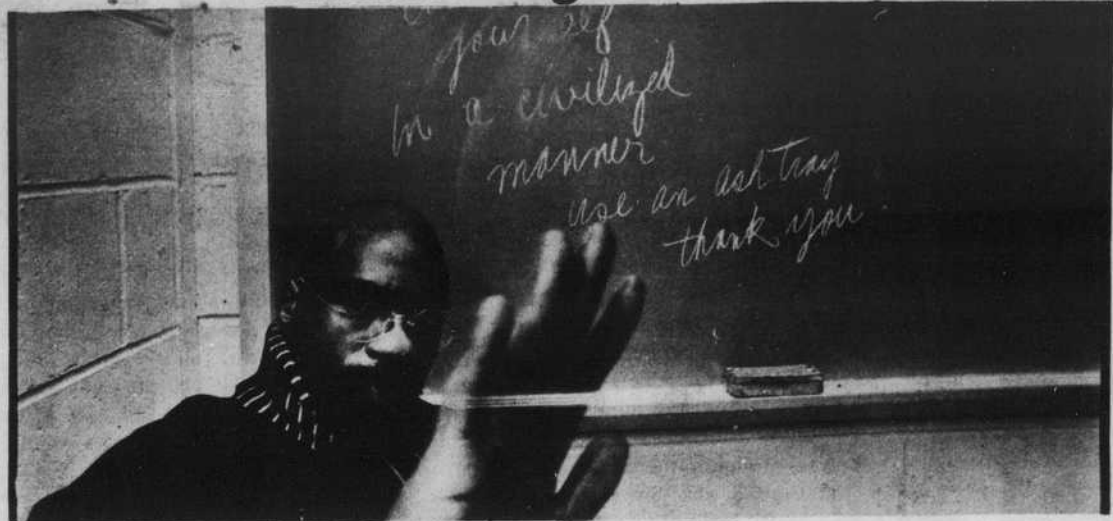
Since I do not believe we should return to the distant past of rigid rote learning with attendant corporal punishment, what then should we do about the disastrous situation in our school systems?

I would favor, perhaps, community control of schools. This would involve parents and others of the community, so that the public schools where the bulk of poor children must go, are responsive and relevant to their needs.

My concern is a practical one. For as we try to open the doors of opportunity, doors that, hitherto, have been closed to our people, we will be prepared educationally to enter and, subsequently, succeed in a given career.

We have some great and dedicated teachers. Let us create an environment where they have a chance to teach.

Penthouse Magazine Editorial



RUBIN "HURRICANE" CARTER

One of the greatest black Americans ever to appear on the sports scene is Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. For eight years now, this one-time middleweight contender has been languishing in the New Jersey prison system on trumped-up murder charges.

In fact, key witnesses against Carter recanted their testimony saying that they had been promised leniency for other crimes if only they would testify against Carter.

Yet, "Hurricane" Carter remains in Trenton State prison, living in the hope of winning an appeal to be freed for a murder he did not commit so many years ago in Paterson, New Jersey.

During this time, Hurricane Carter became a greater man than he ever was in the fight ring, where he knocked out 21

opponents. He became a writer and a philosopher and a man who realized that he had been hounded for years by the police because he was outspoken on the subject of race relations.

It is the opinion of this magazine that there is no need for Hurricane Carter--and the man convicted with him, John Artis--to spend another night in Trenton prison. "Hurricane" Carter, who has so much to offer America, could walk free tomorrow if Gov. Brendan Byrne of New Jersey would sign a pardon immediately.

Americans of all races, black and white, will watch to see what Governor Byrne does. The time for him to act is now. Hurricane Carter and John Artis must be freed now. Gov. Byrne should pardon Hurricane Carter today.

**Black Principals Victims Of Discrimination
NEA Spokesman Charges**

Asserting that "we have been given the foxes full charge of the hen house," the director of the National Education Association's Teacher Rights program charged in an address to be delivered recently that prejudiced school boards have been mainly responsible for the sharp decline in black principalships in 17 Southern and border states.

Samuel B. Ethridge, speaking before the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, emphasized that "the North is guilty too" in respect to black educators. For example, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Wisconsin all need at least 80 per cent more black principals in order to provide an equitable ratio with black students.

Ethridge reported that the number of black principals in the 17 states has dropped from an estimated total of more than 5,000 in 1954, the year of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court desegregation order, to about 3,000 in 1972. He termed his new projection on school principals "very conservative" since 1972 was used as a base rather than an earlier year which would have shown more dramatic losses.

"We asked the court to order the school board to give us our rights," he declared, analyzing "what went wrong." "We should have asked the judge to order the school board out of office...the same people who were in charge in 1954 are still in charge. So nothing has really changed. We have given the foxes full charge of the hen house."

Four states--Arkansas, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Texas--have displaced 55 to 65 per cent of their black principals, Ethridge revealed. "These states," he explained, "had a large number of small schools which were closed and consolidated under the guise of desegregation."

A projected loss of 40 to 45 per cent of Black principals was attributed to Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Delaware, Florida, and Tennessee.

Having proportionally more blacks as principals that these other states are Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Georgia, and South Carolina. Even so, these five states sustained losses of 35 to 37 per cent in Black principals, projections from the latest (1972) HEW statistics indicate.

Among large school districts throughout the nation, only in San Antonio, Texas, were the Black principal ratio and the Black student ratio equal (each 16 per cent). (Nevertheless, San Antonio has significant disparity in the ratio of Spanish speaking principals to Spanish speaking students, the NEA staff official added.) Washington, D.C., is the only other

major city that comes close to San Antonio in Black principal-Black student equity.

"Boston is consistent," Ethridge remarked, "in that it is Public Enemy No. 1 for the black principal as it was for the black teacher and, more recently, the black student."

Ethridge listed 17 Northern states that need at least 50 per cent more black principals in order to achieve an equitable ratio with black student populations.

Ethridge suggested that the SCLC's agenda for the remainder of the 70's should concentrate on exercising political power to bring about educational change. Among goals should be integration of school boards; integration of superintendents' offices; recruiting black and other minority principals and teachers as well as sensitive, understanding people of all races; "getting to drive the bus as well as ride the bus."

"We should concentrate on what happens at the end of the bus ride rather than on the bus or the ride itself," he cautioned. "We should concentrate on the product which the school produces and not so much on the complexion of his classmates. We should concentrate on seeing that schools produce competent black scholars as well as capable workers."

**Black Press Legal Counsel
Begins Unique Law Practice**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (NNPA)-Attorney T. Carlton Richardson discussed the implementation of an "equal legal opportunity program" at a recent reception celebrating his entrance into private practice here.

The 27-year old former Howard University law professor who now serves as general counsel to the National Newspaper Publishers Association said that the program is designed to expand the practical availability of legal services to the public.

The program offers two unique services including the "30-minute conference" at a minimum charge and the "individual retainer system." The conference service is designed to provide legal advice to those who need it without obligation of engaging the attorney for further services.

Under the "individual retainer system," a consumer-client enters a pre-paid legal service agreement, establishing an account with monthly payments for future service.

In establishing the first program of this kind in the District of Columbia, Richardson said he believes that an attorney is committed to take effective steps to ensure equal opportunity to obtain legal representation to all citizens. He received his law training at Drake and George Washington universities.

Las Vegas, Nevada 89106

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