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THE BLACK SCHOLAR

A MEDIA CONFERENCE...

1974

The Black Student Union and the Journalism
Department of North Peralta Community College in
conjunction with Community Services presents:

A MEDIA CONFERENCE on THE MASS MEDIA'S ROLE IN THE BLACK LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Place:

Community Learning Center

6118 East 14th Street

Oakland, California

Date: February 15th, 1974

Time: 8:00 p.m.



MODERATOR: David DuBois - Editor in Chief of the Black Panther Newspaper; Lecturer of Criminology, U.C. Berkeley and
Lecturer of Ethnic Studies, N.P.C.C.

GUEST SPEAKERS: Robert Allen - Associate Editor of "The Black Scholar" and Author of "Black Awakening in Capitalist
America";

Elizabeth Johnson - News Commentator, KDIA Radio.

Reginald Major - Journalist for the Sun Reporter; Author of "A Panther is a Black Cat".

Otis Hyde - Retired Trade Unionist.

ENTERTAINMENT WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE FANTASTIC 26 - PIECE INTERCOMMUNIAL YOUTH BAND.

Admission - \$1.50

The B.S.U. will utilize funds to aid Students of North Peralta Community College.

CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON BLACK MEDIA'S DEBT TO COMMUNITY

(Oakland, Calif.) - The accountability of the Black media to the Black community emerged as the theme of a Conference on the Mass Media's Role in the Black Liberation Struggle held last Friday at the Community Learning Center, 6118 E. 14th Street, Oakland. The conference was sponsored by the Black Student Union and the Journalism Department of North Peralta Community College in conjunction with the school's Community Services.

Following five stirring selections by the Intercommunal Youth Institute Band, under the direction of Brother Charles Moffett, the conference was introduced by Charles Aiken, head of the Journalism Department at North Peralta Community College. Brother Aiken commented on the need for good journalism programs in the schools of the country and the overall importance of the press. "All of us grow up ignorant because of the information we are getting", he said.

GUESTS

He then introduced the conference moderator, David DuBois, Editor-in-Chief of THE BLACK PANTHER, and the distinguished guest speakers: Robert Allen, Associate Editor of *The Black Scholar* magazine and author of *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*; Elizabeth Johnson, news commentator for KDIA radio in Oakland; Reginald Major, writer for the *Sun Reporter* of San Francisco and author of *A Panther Is A Black Cat*; and Otis Hyde, well-known labor activist and retired trade unionist.

Brother Allen spoke on the history of the Black press and its role in the liberation struggle. He noted: "The history of the Black press can't be separated from the liberation struggle. The Black press was born out of the liberation struggle." Allen then listed three reasons for the establishment of the Black press (the first Black newspaper published in the U.S. was named *Freedom's Journal*, in 1827): (1) To expose and protest against racial discrimination and abuse; (2) To put forward youth programs and proposals for social change formulated by Black leaders and organizations; (3) To inform the Black community about activities and events of interest to Black people that are not reported by the White press.



Moderator DAVID DU BOIS addressing Black Media Conference. At table from left are: ROBERT ALLEN, REGINALD MAJOR, ELIZABETH JOHNSON and OTIS HYDE.

The publication of *The Chicago Defender* in 1905, was "an important turning point for the Black press," Allen said, "because it marked the introduction of sensationalism into Black newspapers for the purpose of increasing sales. He described *The Chicago Defender* as an example of the commercial Black press while such newspapers such as THE BLACK PANTHER and *Mohammed Speaks* represent the crusading Black press. Allen explained that there is a serious conflict that must be resolved concerning the commercial interest of the Black press as opposed to its political interest.

Sister Johnson, speaking on the role of radio in the liberation struggle, declared that as a Black radio commentator her "pressing responsibility is to keep the Black community informed about the events that directly relate to our survival". She emphasized that she is more concerned about being "honest" in her reporting than she is about being "objective".

IMPORTANCE

Commenting on the importance of radio, she noted the oral tradition of Black history and added, "Radio is far more capable of providing those things we need, and it's not top 10 music. However", she continued, "radio stations will not change unless the community demands it."

As a reporter for White-owned and operated, but Black-oriented KDIA, Sister Johnson emphasized that Blacks must begin to move into top management positions at radio stations in order for change to come about.

Calling for the establishment of a strong national Black press,

Brother Major, who was a writer for the now defunct *African News Service*, complained that Black papers failed to subscribe to the *African News Service* which sought to provide national news of importance to Black people. He added that the present trend is for Black papers to concentrate on local news. "The vigor of the Black press is dependent on the issues that come to it daily," Major said.

ATTACK

In a fiery attack against the general mass media, for being "anti-labor" and "anti-democratic", Brother Otis Hyde said: "We must mobilize the masses and change the media's interpretation of reality." While he said he believes the Black press is a "Movement press", Brother Hyde attacked the press in general for being guided by "a corporate industrial profit motive" and the ideological institutions of this society.

Before the question-and-answer period, Brother DuBois commented on the media's role in the African liberation struggle, and noted: "The White media uses our ignorance of one another as a weapon."

The audience, inspired by the excellent presentations of the four guest speakers, asked many questions of the speakers and offered suggestions for bringing pressure to bear on Black newspapers to be more responsive to serious needs of the Black community.

Each panel member expressed his/her willingness to serve as a resource person for the journalism programs of the various Bay area community colleges. Brother Allen suggested the formation of a Student Coalition for Media Change. □