

STATEMENTS OF ISAIAH ROBINSON, CHAIRMAN, HARLEM PARENTS COMMITTEE, AND ROBERT WASHINGTON, ADMINISTRATOR, HARLEM FREEDOM SCHOOL

Mr. ROBINSON. I am Isaiah Robinson, chairman of the Harlem Parents Committee.

Mr. Chairman, we are indeed happy to be here and it is a privilege for us to have an opportunity to testify before this committee. We are hoping, however, that this is only the beginning and that a real investigation takes place into the educational genocide that is taking place in the black communities.

Today, we are discussing the treatment of minority groups in textbooks and I have to take issue with certain phrases with respect to the educationally disadvantaged child which seem to have set the tone and character of the present-day philosophy, which is an extension of the past. We prefer to characterize him as the educationally exploited child based on the evidence we have at hand in our own community.

Reviewing the textbooks in the elementary schools of New York City, we find that most of them seem to perpetuate the history and philosophy based on racism in education in the United States.

I am not reading from the text that we prepared. I must apologize, because I only found out yesterday morning we should prepare one; so our statements are very sparse. I am speaking more from the opinions gathered from information we have received and witnessed in our community.

Chairman POWELL. Without objection your statement will be included in the record at this point.

(The statement referred to follows:)

STATEMENT BY ISAIAH ROBINSON, CHAIRMAN, HARLEM PARENTS COMMITTEE, AND ROBERT WASHINGTON, ADMINISTRATOR, HARLEM FREEDOM SCHOOL

THE AFRO-AMERICAN IN TEXTS AND LIBRARY BOOKS

A famous author has characterized the Afro-American as the "Invisible Man." When we look at the texts used in our educational institutions, we find this characterization true in one respect and false in another. For example, when something of value, such as the contributions to this country's development, is needed, we are the Invisible Man. Yet in order to maintain the myth of white superiority, disparaging material is found in great abundance in the texts and libraries and is carried to even greater heights through the major communications media for more lasting psychological impact. Therefore, this prodigious process of "Brain Washing" for all segments of the population reinforces the myth of black inferiority. Since we are interested in the position of the Afro-American, we must conclude that he is, in fact, the Invisible Man.

Positive Afro-American visibility in our texts, libraries and body politic is the sine quo non for the birth of real democracy in the U.S.A. and indeed in the world. It strikes at the heart of our so-called Judeo-Christian ethic, international, intergroup and inter-personal relationships upon which our country has masqueraded as champions of the free world. It would explode the highly cherished myth of white superiority. It would liberate the 200 million citizens of the U.S., to really enjoy, for the first time, Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. The institution that is charged with the responsibility for initiating and promulgating the norms and values of our society is the public school. So it is quite logical that we look to the public school for leadership in changing the misguided attitudes of the country, by placing in true perspective the worth of all its citizens.

This can be accomplished by outlawing the history, philosophy and practices of public education that is based on racism. Then replace the missing pages of