

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4) can't believe *Just Out* is printing it! This article demonstrates a total lack of historical perspective and understanding regarding Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s work in the world. Furthermore, it perpetuates mistrust and divisiveness between lesbians and gays of all colors.

In this year when it is a matter of survival that we unify ourselves to see clearly and combat a very real and dangerous attack from the far right, as articulated by the OCA, it is inconceivable to me that *Just Out* would print a diatribe that is this malicious, vindictive, illogical, and *hateful*.

I understand that a person might have some of these feelings when focused on the extreme pain which racism and homophobia (heterosexism) have caused in our lives. I read a statement the other day which is simplistic perhaps, but offers more positive support for change than anything in this article. It said, "When you realize the world is round you understand that it is impossible to take sides." Dr. King lived and took political action grounded in this understanding.

I, personally, am not interested in a political movement which reacts out of fear, hatred, or anger. In the depths of my being I know the only way for me to move forward, to grow and change, is to be motivated by love. I will not support or tolerate *Just Out* advocating anything else. This article represents the height of irresponsible journalism. And it points out the depths to which *Just Out* is sinking. Please pay attention and alter your course before you lose all credibility with the community.

Kristan Aspen
Portland

Ariel Waterwoman responds:

My sincerest apologies to all of you who were offended by the headline "I have a dream." I never meant to exploit or dishonor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or his wonderful contributions to society.

In mentioning forced sterilization and relocation, I did not mean to imply that I advocated that as a viable option. What I wanted to do was put the shoe on the other foot for a moment, and by doing so to stimulate compassion and understanding. Apparently I failed to be clear in my intention. I couldn't agree more with Saadat and Wilson that these are obscenely violent acts done to people. I know that because I was raised by a mother who was surgically sterilized against her will after the birth of her last child. My Jewish uncle was sterilized as a result of repeated violent assaults to his genitals during World War II in the US army. My aunt was sterilized as a result of severe infection due to an illegal abortion when she was 17 years old. Believe me, I know the long term results of these acts.

As Rainwater acknowledges, it is very risky addressing highly charged or difficult issues. Discussing the details of white supremacy and racism can be very empowering for all races of people. We learn by examining and analyzing how it works. These are steps which lead to dismantling it.

I address oppression, not from a place of hatred, but from a strong belief in the inherent goodness of people. Hopefully, it is a way to broaden the scope of our struggle against oppression. Often times just mentioning the word "racism" stirs up so much anguish in people that we freeze up. It is a word that is loaded with accusation, pain and guilt. I want to work to diffuse the emotional charge attached to these words so that we can talk to each other.

I deeply appreciate the feedback given to me by Wilson, Saadat, Aspen, and Rainwater on these difficult issues. *Just Out* can not help but grow from it.

The power of words

To the Editor:

The April 15 Lesbian Forum on lesbian battering titled "Naming the Label" continued work begun by lesbian staff from Bradley-Angle (domestic violence shelter for battered women) and other lesbian community members at a number of earlier workshops. The forum included some thought-provoking skits and some healthy dis-

cussion and debate.

However, I strongly feel that two statements made at this *public* forum should have been publicly challenged and weren't. The first (I don't know who said it) claimed that two of the women involved in putting together the book *Naming the Violence - Speaking Out About Lesbian Battering* are batterers. Because the women being referred to weren't named, the reputations of all the women involved were called into question. And because

the statement was made in connection with the book, the credibility of the book itself was undercut. This is the only book I know of that begins to address the issue of lesbian battering, that at long last gives voice to the survivors.

The second unchallenged statement was made by Lore Wintergreen, former director of Bradley-Angle. She said that she used to work at B.A. and that people in the domestic violence field "use the word 'abuse' pretty loosely." I feel that the effect

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