

EDITORIAL / OPINION

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When Black pioneer George W. Bush and his family arrived in Oregon in 1844, they were greeted by a law that prohibited Black people from living in the state for more than six months. Mr. Bush finally settled in the State of Washington, several miles from Tumwater near Olympia. Consequently, the Bush family became the first African-American family to reside in Washington, as well as one of Washington's first five farming families.

Because it did not welcome Blacks, Oregon has gained an unhealthy racial reputation that still haunts it today. There is the widespread belief that Blacks do not belong in Oregon, and it is causing concern among members of Oregon's Black population.

More and more, Blacks are experiencing the poisonous bite of racism and, in an environment conducive to racial hostility between Blacks and whites and other racial communities, racial harmony between all communities cannot flourish.

The Portland Observer newspaper, thus urges the State of Oregon to increase its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial harassment, racial intimidation, racial discrimination and acts of racial violence.

We urge the Oregon State Legislature to guarantee Black Oregonians and other racial communities Constitutional protection against racial harassment, racial intimidation, racial discrimination and acts of racial violence.

We urge all local government and law-enforcement agencies throughout the State of Oregon to improve their ability to respond to acts of racial harassment, racial intimidation, racial discrimination and acts of racial violence. We urge that this improved ability be expanded to Blacks and other persons of color as they travel throughout the state as citizens of Oregon.

We urge all local communities, Black, white, Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic Americans to establish effective grievance response mechanisms.

We urge increased accountability of public officials in all areas of race relations.

We urge the conviction and prosecution of any person found guilty of racial harassment, racial intimidation, and racial violence.

We urge that these recommendations be considered without delay.

Sen Simon Pays Tribute to Late Harold Washington on Senate Floor

Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) paid tribute to Mayor Harold Washington of Chicago today, urging the Senate to recognize that "on Wednesday, Nov. 25, 1987, the City (of Chicago) lost a great Mayor, the State of Illinois lost a great legislator and the nation lost a great African."

The Illinois Senator reminisced about a variety of Simon/Washington efforts including fair employment practices legislation in the Illinois General Assembly, the Martin

Luther King, Jr., birthday bill, and the Civil Rights Act of 1984.

Simon called Washington "a genuine reformer," who expanded political involvement and empowerment for America's minorities.

Simon extended an Alexander Pope poem in to the Congressional Record, saying it "sums up Harold Washington, the man and politician:

"Statesman, yet friend to truth!
of soul sincere,

"In action faithful, and in honour clear:

"Who broke no promise, served no private end,

"Who gained no title, and who lost no friend."

Moral Essay
Epistle V.

Civil Rights Journal

Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

Win, Jesse, Win

The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson's decision to once again seek the Democratic nomination for President of the United States has implications far beyond next year's Democratic convention. While listening to Jackson make his announcement speech at the Raleigh, N.C. Civic Center, I realized that the future of this nation is contingent upon how well our national political process is able to respond to both the challenge and the opportunity.

Jackson is now considered by the established media and professional pollsters to be not only a serious candidate but the leading candidate and, as a result, presidential politics will never be the same. But what is more important than the fact that Jackson is running is the way he is running and the issues he is raising.

Why would an African American in 1987 risk one's life to seek the highest political office in the nation when it is so obvious that the course is fraught with landmines and sharks out for the kill? And why are the hopes and dreams of the millions of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans and white Americans who make up the National Rainbow Coalition lifted to new heights by this candidacy?

In Jackson's own words, he wants "to serve America." Of course, his serving the nation also means changing the nation. With new and bold leadership in the White House, Jackson affirms that it is possible to make the nation and the world more just and more humane. It was interesting to listen to white farmers from the mid-West who had come to Raleigh to declare their support for Rev. Jackson. They stated that Jackson is the only candidate who offers them hope and a way out of their economic crisis.

Jackson is also the only candidate to challenge the economic injustice created by U.S. multi-national corporations in order to exploit the workers of third world countries. Self-determination, human rights and economic justice are the basic principles of Jackson's foreign policy.

The day after Jackson's speech I travelled by plane from Raleigh to Chicago. While waiting to get my boarding pass I looked around and noticed a long multi-racial line of people of different ages waiting to board the plane. I soon discovered they were among the more than 6,000 persons who had attended the National Rainbow Coalition Convention. There was a sense of joy and excitement as those in line began to embrace and congratulate each other on their mutual sense of accomplishment. Many of them now realize that the diversity of the Rainbow was more than just theory; it was a living reality. The hope is that this kind of political organizing and mobilizing, across racial and economic lines, will become the basis of a progressive transformation of this society.

For me, there are moral and theological implications of the Jackson candidacy that go beyond politics. In the Black church tradition we affirm that "the Lord sure moves in mysterious ways." At a time when there has been a dramatic increase in racially motivated violence and other acts of overt racism across the nation, an African American emerges as a major leadership figure for the whole nation. At a time when President Reagan and conservative political forces seem determined to continue leading the nation toward greater racial and economic divisiveness, Jackson emerges as a viable alternative who provides a moral vision and a commitment to all people.

When Jackson left Raleigh, he left without the protection of the Secret Service. A major candidate for the highest office in the land deserves this federal protection. The officials in Washington who are responsible for making the decision about who receives Secret Service protection should expedite this matter as soon as possible. We must not allow Jesse Jackson to take this risk by himself. We must embrace him with our prayers and our support. I am personally committed to the National Rainbow Coalition and to the Jackson campaign.

What's at stake is not just winning an election. It is also winning the commitment and energy of millions of people with the new sense of determination to change this nation for the better. Win, Jesse, win!



Along the Color Line

Dr. Manning Marable is Chairperson of the Black Studies Department, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

Puerto Rico and Black America

Within less than two decades, the largest nonwhite population in the United States will be Hispanic, not Afro-American. The political implications for Blacks are already profound. The majority of Cuban Americans clearly supports conservative foreign and domestic policies, which are fundamentally at odds with Blacks' interests. However, most Chicanos and Puerto Ricans overwhelmingly support progressive-to-liberal politics, and the possibilities of developing a mutually advantageous relationship seem very possible.

Last month, I was invited to deliver a series of lectures at the Social Science Research Center at the University of Puerto Rico. Students and faculty alike were extremely receptive, expressing interest particularly in Jesse Jackson, the Rainbow Coalition, and the current state of the civil rights movement. Most revealing were the private discussions I had with progressive political leaders and activists who advocate Puerto Rico's independence from the United States.

Puerto Rico is an island of the most profound social contradictions and economic contrasts. In the major city of San Juan, one appears to see an environment of affluence, luxurious hotels and casinos. But most white American tourists do not see how the majority of Puerto Ricans actually live and struggle. They do not visit the overcrowded public housing facilities, or the poverty and misery in the rural districts. They have little knowledge of the unrest felt by thousands of young people on campuses, or the massive discontent of wage laborers who work for marginal amounts.

Most Afro-Americans know surprisingly little about Puerto Rico, except perhaps that the island is a colony of this country and that at least one-third of the population has African ancestry. Some Puerto Ricans with European features and ancestry like to pretend that racial discrimination doesn't exist on the island. That's incorrect on at least two counts. When the Americans seized this island back in 1898, they quickly reestablished their odious system of Jim Crow in San Juan. Secondly, Black Puerto Ricans still appear to be disproportionately represented among the lowest paid workers and the unemployed. Racial prejudice is different, partially because of the cultural heritage of the Spanish, but it is still a major problem.

The Reagan Administration likes to point to Puerto Rico as a dynamic, economic success story which should be imitated across the Caribbean basin and in Latin America. When compared to much of the Third World, or to neighboring Haiti, the economic situation in Puerto Rico appears at first robust. With a per capita income of \$3,900 a year in 1983, the island of 3 million people produces more for external trade than Columbia's 26 million population. Even a casual visitor can notice the large number of automobiles all over San Juan. Puerto Rico has four times the number of jobs in manufacturing than in agriculture, an inversion of the classical Third World economic model. Three fourths of all people own their homes, and over one million attend schools.

But these statistics mark the profound degree of exploitation and dependency imposed by North Americans upon the Puerto Rican nation. More than half of the population is forced to live on food stamps, which were introduced thirteen years ago. The official jobless rate stands at 20 percent, but the real figure is closer to 30 percent. More serious is a labor force participation rate of approximately 40 percent. This means that about six out of every ten Puerto Rican adults are not working, or survive by means of the "subterranean economy." Wages are low, and the crime rate is growing.

The entire economy is organized to benefit U.S. corporations at the expense of the people. American businesses made \$8.1 billion in profits in 1981, but little of this money was ever reinvested back into the economy. The social and economic distance between the local upper classes and the poor is tremendous. But the U.S. has too much at stake there to sacrifice its illusion of widespread prosperity. For military as well as corporate interests, the American government has no desire to give up its Third World colony. Advocates of independence have been victimized, harassed, imprisoned and even murdered.

Black Americans must support the goal of self determination for the Puerto Rican nation. I personally favor the unqualified independence of the island, but that choice must be freely made by Puerto Ricans themselves, not by the U.S. Puerto Rican rights must be merged with our own political agenda for social justice.

Letters to the Editor

Scientific Enchanters

Concerning "Racism at its Best" by Brother John Dudley Leftridge III, member of Uhuru Sasa, 9/9/87: I still believe dialogue is needed in the community. Many people around this nation are aware of a systematic movement to destroy the meager advances of the last two decades and to freeze power in the hands of those who have historically held it by virtue of their race and class. I'm aware it is in the area of criminal justice and penology that the systematic and systematized oppression and racism of this society is most blatantly visible. We have but to examine who is arrested, who is indicted, who suffers pre-trial detention, who is convicted, who is sentenced, and who is eligible for parole. It is clear that certain groups bear the weight of selective law enforcement and the apportionment of punitive sanctions.

I'm inclined to believe the most superficial examination of the "correctional institutions" of the United States reveals the race and class biases which consistently operate against the interests of Black, Third World people and the poor caucasian. The need for pervasive

changes in the administration of criminal justice and penal practices as a step toward the liberation of Blacks and other oppressed peoples of this country has been amply and clearly documented.

Brother John, if the oppression is systematic, then our response to it must become equally systematic. Two Black lawyers and a few community groups cannot be pitted against the well-organized forces of the State of Oregon. An effective new instrumentality must be forged to deal with the synchronized and highly effective methods of injustice which are presently wasting our ranks.

I would like to deal with linguistics for a moment. By language, I am referring to more than oral or written expressions, phrases, sentences and words. Our people are being tricked every day around this nation by Scientific Enchanters, who master the English language. To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means, above all, to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization, for a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by the language.

Having given a brief synopsis of

the literature supporting the inter-relationship between culture and language, I would like to summarize by saying that so-called Christian caucasoid Amerikan [sic] culture is racist (pro-caucasian/anti-Black). Documentation of racism in this paranoid, schizophrenic society's culture has been covered by too many federal documents, sociological and social scientists' research and through popular literature to attempt to cover that now. Since language is a primary transmitter of culture, the English language is, therefore, racist.

In my travels around this nation, I've defined "racism" as the conscious and/or unconscious desire manifesting itself in the collective caucasian to destroy, castrate and exploit Black people, both psychologically and physically, due to inherent feelings of caucasoid superiority. All other ethnic or racial groups of people are referred to by geographical origin, religion, culture or language, and the term "Negro" meets none of these categories. In essence, the figment of the caucasoid Amerikan's [sic] imagination become a reality when Afrikans [sic] accepted the category "Negro" with all of the inherent values, symbols and definitions implicit in the term.

Many so-called scholars would probably say that it was imperative for Afrikans [sic] to accept the language in order to survive in their new environment. However, Afrikans [sic] were not taught the English language as a means of survival and self-actualization. Rather, they learned the language in the process of trying to obey the primitive commands of their so-called Christian caucasoid captors.

I'm inclined to believe it is possible that the survival of an Afrikan [sic] language would have resulted in the liberation of Afrikans [sic]. Efforts to alleviate that possibility manifested itself in the captors separating Afrikans [sic] who spoke the same language. The Afrikans [sic] language gave Afrikans [sic] the protection of speaking with each other without the captors' knowledge of their communication; the language was symbolic of a peoplehood and brotherhood which exceeded the commonality of bondage and assured the maintenance of Afrikan [sic] identity, personality and culture. The commonality of language strengthened the commonality of color, bondage and culture, and finally there would have been little room for "Uncle-Tomism" with communication being a barrier between captor and captive.

Dr. Jamil Cherovee

PORTLAND OBSERVER

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION
Established in 1970

Alfred L. Henderson/Publisher Leon L. Harris/Editor

PORTLAND OBSERVER

is published weekly by Exie Publishing Company, Inc.

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P.O. Box 3137

Portland, Oregon 97208
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Deadlines for all submitted materials:
Articles: Monday, 5 p.m.; Ads: Tuesday, 5 p.m.

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area.

The PORTLAND OBSERVER - Oregon's oldest African American Publication - is a member of The National Newspaper Association - Founded in 1885, The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York.



To start the Portland Observer coming every week

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