

EDITORIAL / OPINION

GUEST EDITORIAL:

Another Legislative Overkill

by Stephen McPherson
Special Correspondent

The creators of the American Constitution felt so strongly about the right of citizens to protect themselves from harm they chiseled an article into that document which guarantees "the right of every citizen to bear arms." In a previous editorial this writer lamented the fact that our 200-year-old constitution was outdated and over-amended. It should be rewritten to reflect our evolving society and the technological advances that the founding fathers never could have envisioned.

Experience has demonstrated quite adequately that all persons are not psychologically stable enough to carry any type of weapon. It always has been impressive to witness the fact that in England and the other countries of the United Kingdom, law enforcement officers do not carry lethal weapons. What is it about our society that makes instruments of death standard equipment? Many non-lethal alternatives are available. Why don't we use them?

Regardless of the apparent deficiencies in the Constitution it is very important that none of its guarantees be abrogated for whatever noble cause that might be intended.

The housing authorities's intention to deny tenants under their jurisdiction the right to bear arms is unconstitutional. Additionally, they have denied their clients not only equal protection under the law but also the right to live in peace and harmony in a tranquil environment.

It is about time inhabitants of public housing banded together and brought about a class action suit to ensure safe, adequate and clean housing. Too Long have the people of Portland tolerated official nonfeasance from its public officials.

Each time a new crisis arises, another quick fix is pulled from the bag of tricks that gets good press coverage but does nothing to resolve the problem. Criminals do not register their weapons. Most crimes are not committed with legal weapons. Hasn't anyone told the people who make such foolish decisions that the passing of a law to ban something does not make that item disappear? Adequate lighting and the policing of high crime areas does reduce crime.

This new approach to a very serious problem is almost as full of such nescience as the governor's proposal to build more penitentiaries to reduce crime. Doesn't it make more sense to spend a good amount of money on the prevention of crime rather than on committing the people of Oregon to the 24-hour custodial care of lesser offenders? Large dealers are not incarcerated. We can't even arrest the young person who shot Kahlina Shamsudin. How can the banning of weapons from public housing reduce drive-by shootings? None of this makes any sense. Intuitively we all know that it is not going to work. To write laws which cannot work is to re-invent anarchy. Wise up, folks. There are more effective ways to run a city!

Grand Ronde Indians Wait Five Years For Reservation

Recently, President Reagan signed into law H.R. 4143, legislation sponsored by Oregon Congressman Les AuCoin and Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield, to create a 9,811-acre reservation for Oregon's Grand Ronde Indian tribe. The following is a statement from Congressman Les AuCoin:

"This is the culmination of five years of work by the tribe, the community, and the Congress, and it can hardly be more satisfying than this.

"This new reservation sets straight past injustices, gives tribal members the chance to improve the quality of their lives, and protects and promotes economic opportunities around the entire area. The community as a whole has done itself proud by working to put together this compromise."

Cred Of The Black Press

The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from social and national antagonisms when it accords to every person, regardless of race, color, or creed, full human and legal rights. Hating no person, fearing no person, the Black Press strives to help every person in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

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The Other Side



by Harold C. Williams

Ignorance: A Luxury We Can't Afford

This past week school started. A lot of kids were happy to be back in school with their new clothes, cute lunch buckets, and British Knights shoes. Parents will be paying until next year on the bill for the outfits their children will be wearing for this school year.

We want our children to have the best of everything, so we make the sacrifice. But we must not lose sight of the real issue at hand, which is to ensure that our children have the best education possible to allow them a fair chance in the competitive world they will face in the future. We must insist that the best books, and the best teachers the public schools have to offer be in the classrooms to shape the minds of these precious young people.

For as much patience as we

give to shopping at Nordstrom, Meier and Frank, Lamont's, and Frederick and Nelson to ensure that our children look good on the outside, we must give the same kind of patience to the schools in insuring that our children will look good on the inside with strong, positive, creative minds. To have the best clothes and the least knowledge is a price we cannot afford to pay or allow our children to be indebted with in the future.

Ignorance is a luxury we cannot afford. We in the Black community are very high on style. It is time that we become just as high on education, on what is being taught and who is teaching our children. Which will we equip our children with? A few fancy clothes or the best training money can buy? To all the future geniuses: Have a good school year!



Along the Color Line

Dr. Manning Marable

"Race and Presidential Politics"

Despite the unprecedented accomplishments of the Reverend Jesse Jackson in the 1988 Democratic primaries, there is substantial evidence indicating that millions of white voters rejected the progressive candidate largely on the grounds of race. According to the data compiled by University of California, Irvine professor Amihai Glazer, based on the results of 22 Democratic primaries, a one percent increase in the percentage of Black voters in any state corresponded to a one percent decline in the fraction of white voters who supported Jackson in the state's Democratic primary. In other words, the more Blacks who live, work and vote in any state, the fewer whites there were in that state who were willing to vote for Jackson.

For instance, Jackson received about one-third of the votes from whites in the state of Vermont, which has less than one percent Black voting age population. Jesse obtained over 35 percent of the white vote in Oregon, which has a Black population of one percent. In Ohio, however, where Blacks represent about 12 percent of the electorate, Jackson's vote declined to about 17 percent among whites; in New York, with a Black electorate of 14 percent, the white vote for Jackson dropped to 15 percent. In New Jersey, where one out of five Democratic voters are Black, the white vote for Jackson declined to 13 percent.

In summary, the white electorate is far more "race conscious" in its electoral behavior than are Blacks, who are accustomed to voting for white Democratic candidates year after year. Glazer suggests that covert racial bigotry is manifested within the political culture of whites to such an extent that it can be accurately measured. "In the old days, if you were a racist white," Glazer notes, "you might get violent against Blacks ... That's now not accepted, so one way of expressing these emotions is to vote against the candidate Blacks support."

The immediate consequences of Glazer's research have not escaped the consideration of the Bush and Dukakis campaigns. In 1984, Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale carried about 28 percent of the overall Southern white vote; in states like Mississippi and Alabama, Mondale won less than 15 percent of the white vote. Symbolically,

Mondale was perceived as the "Blacks' candidate", and given the degree of political weight accorded to racial considerations; the masses of whites threw their support behind Reagan, the candidate who symbolized "whites' interests."

Bush is trying to repeat Reagan's strategy by building a white united front across the South. Tactically, he is trying to turn the Democrat's two man ticket into a troika — Dukakis, Bentsen, and Jesse Jackson. In the conservative Democratic ethnic enclaves of the Midwest and east coast, Bush is repeating the same tactic. In Chicago, he is aligned with the vicious racist, former Chicago Democratic boss "Fast Eddie" Vrdolyak; in Philadelphia, Bush is backed by former mayor and police chief Frank Rizzo. Bush has opposed vigorous enforcement of civil rights measures, and backed the destruction of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. Perhaps more importantly, Bush's entire campaign has emphasized issues of concern which mobilize subliminal racial fears and anxieties among many whites. Without overt racist rhetoric, the vice president is trying to create the impression that Dukakis is the "Blacks' candidate."

Dukakis could have seized the opportunity to build an effective anti-racist coalition, structured upon the successes of the Jackson campaign. He could have used the electoral forum as a bridge to link multicultural constituencies, while simultaneously condemning the Reagan-Bush record on civil rights and affirmative action. Instead, Dukakis has largely capitulated to the racist currents in white politics by accommodating to Bush's tactics. Last month, Dukakis gave a major speech at a county fair in Philadelphia, Mississippi, the site of the brutal murders of three civil rights workers in 1964. Dukakis not only failed to mention the executions, but neglected to outline his vision of a bi-racial society founded on the principles of social justice for all. More recently, his campaign staff is reported to have ordered Jesse Jackson not to campaign in certain states, for fear of his sparking a white backlash against Dukakis. The only way to challenge racism is to attack it directly; in his failure to challenge racism in presidential politics, Dukakis is sowing the seeds of his own defeat.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL



by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

A Salute To Newark Mayor James

At a time when there are renewed public speculations about the quality and competence of African-American leadership at the local and national levels, it is indeed good news to know of the caliber and the effectiveness of the Honorable Sharpe James, the mayor of Newark, New Jersey. There are many major cities in the United States that now have an African-American as mayor, including Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C.

Mayor James, on Sept. 7, 1988, took an initiative that will have a profound international and historic impact. The mayor of Newark announced that the city of Newark will establish formal "city to city" relations with Luanda, the capital city of Angola. Newark, under Mayor James' leadership, is the first city in the United States to formally reach out to the People's Republic of Angola. Luanda is a city of approximately two million people, and it is one of the major port cities on the west coast of Africa. Newark is the largest container port on the east coast of the United States.

Mayor James stated, "We take this initiative to make Newark and Luanda sister cities because we are both committed to justice, peace, economic development and human decency."

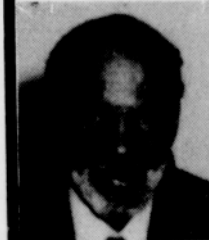
We all are well aware that during the last eight years the Reagan Administration has imposed an unjust diplomatic blockade concerning the People's Republic of Angola. This struggling African nation in southern Africa has been officially recognized by all nations of the world with the exception of the racist apartheid regime of South Africa and the United States. Angola deserves to be treated with justice and peace

as all nations should be treated in the world community. It appears that the Reagan Administration has a proclivity for attacking Third World nations, particularly nations of African and Latino peoples. We well remember the devastating and illegal invasion of Grenada by the United States, as well as the continued immoral support of the Reagan Administration for the Contra's against Nicaragua and for the UNITA mercenaries against Angola. Now that the South African army has retreated from Angolan territory, why is it that George Bush and Ronald Reagan persist in their efforts to continue to isolate Angola diplomatically on the one hand, and on the other hand continue to send weapons of death and destruction to Jonas Savimbi's UNITA bandits?

At the press conference in Newark when Mayor James made his announcement, representatives of the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Angola to the United Nations expressed their appreciation and gratitude for Mayor James' leadership in helping to improve relations between Angola and the United States.

Mayor James has been mayor of Newark since 1986. Prior to his election as mayor, he served 16 years on the Newark City Council. If you talk to residents in Newark today, many will affirm that Newark is presently undergoing a positive revitalization, both politically and economically. Mayor Sharpe James is to be credited for Newark's remarkable progress during the last two years. Certainly, because of Mayor James, the people of Newark and the people of Luanda will be able to join hands in the cause of international goodwill, development and justice. We salute Mayor Sharpe James.

Perspectives



by Professor McKinley Burt

Robin Hood and Law School

Following on from last week, I cite other comments by Secretary of Education, William Bennett: "Curriculum has been unchallenging and uninteresting ... Stress thought, not just methodology and results ... Focus on classic and imaginative literature."

Certainly, I documented that for over one hundred years Black educators designed and implemented curriculum that has more than met the standards quoted above. Last week, we set that tone, Mr. Bennett — an august company, indeed, you seek to join. We who were consultants in developing Portland's "Multicultural Curriculum" note that the Ladies Home Journal for September cited it "among the ten best in the nation." In the tradition, my lesson plans incorporated classic vehicles ranging from Alice in Wonderland to African mathematical papyri. We should look now for "implementation."

A particular directive of the secretary: "Focus on classic and imaginative literature." It was years after the fact when I realized that my fifth grade encounter with "Robin Hood" had a lot to do with an easy passage of the law school entrance exam (as a high school dropout). Not just that Robin "robbed the rich folks because the poor folks had no gold" (Nat King Cole), but that those early

teachers piqued our interest and imagination with similar social comment.

They explained why Friar Tuck was freed from the jail of the Sheriff of Nottingham before the traveling judge came on his circuit to hold court (The Spring Assize of Anglo Saxon law — today's Circuit Judge). A child would be answered, "Yes, the sheriff collected taxes then as now." It was a painless assimilation of western legal and social concepts. In Sherwood Forest, Robin Hood poached food for the hungry serfs on the fee estates of the landed gentry — the Magna Charta (1215 A.D.) gave rights only to the nobles, and the King (the State) had eminent domain over all.

Apropos both my mother and aunt, out of teacher's college by 1920, claimed they could take the Bible, Shakespeare and a good math book and prepare any Black child for the best prep schools. Early "Partners In Excellence" primed the kids' imagination for Jules Verne's "Journey to the Center of the Earth," or Buck Rogers in an early "Star Ship Enterprise." More "imaginative" science later in learning that "the 'octaves' of the Table of Chemical Elements and the Electromagnetic Spectrum are comparable to 'great symphonies'."

Yes, the world is a story, and "The play is the thing." It can be taught well in the "narrative." All our children can handle it — give them a chance at excellence.