

EDITORIAL / OPINION

COMMENTARY: BOGGLING THE FEATHERS IN THE WINGS OF LOVE



Recently Commissioner Dick Bogle made one of his rare official visits to the lower Northeast Sector when he created a media event by marching in with television cameras, newspaper reporters and chief building inspectors to witness the padlocking of *The Wings of Love*, a shelter for the homeless located at 100 North Killingsworth here in Portland. The reason given for this action was based on the allegation that the edifice was unsuitable for human habitation. Complaints of that nature had been alleged by former residents. That evening and the next day, the usual two minute television excerpts informed the community along with graphic displays of what had occurred. For several days, the local daily newspaper also described the events in great detail along with accompanying pictures.

On Tuesday of this week, the good commissioner made a return trip to the *Wings of Love* followed by the same retinue of the press corp and building inspectors. This time, he had come to remove the padlock, embrace Mrs. Alezine Mayes, Director of the house and to pledge her the full support of his office.

Why the sudden change of heart? None of the major violations had been corrected. On closer inspection, it was found that the *Wings of Love* was a paradise compared with *The Open Heart* or *Baloney Joe's*. Even the chief housing inspector admits that these two shelters would have a difficult time passing a rigorous inspection. Then why give so much attention to this establishment that has been in business for more than seven years, operating just as effectively as the others without help from any governmental agency? Only Mr. Bogle can answer that question.

On the other hand, it would appear that he made several blunders with regard to due process of the law, sensitivity to the needs of the lower Northeast Sector and exercising good judgment as an elected official of all the people of Portland. Even if he thought he was acting in an official capacity, Mr. Bogle certainly did not have the right to breach the peace and tranquility of a private institution with an invasion of television cameras and newspaper reporters. He is quite fortunate that Mrs. Mayes is not a vengeful person. She certainly has every right to seek legal redress. Such an action would probably cost the city so much in damages that the *Wings of Love* never again would be faced with impecuniousness. There is a lesson to be learned from this shameful usurpation of authority.

ABORTION ISSUE HEATS UP

By John E. Jacob

The Supreme Court will soon decide whether to revise its 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which provided constitutional protection for abortion. The abortion issue has also surfaced in the highly publicized raids on family planning clinics by anti-abortion zealots.

If the Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, abortion would not stop. The issue would simply be turned over to the states, and there would be fifty different state abortion laws.

Abortion would then be a privilege of the wealthy who could travel to other states or even foreign countries to have abortions, while the poor would do what they did before 1973 -- go to illegal back-alley abortionists.

Whatever one's personal beliefs regarding the propriety of abortion, it would be a disastrous mistake to rescind constitutional protection for it, especially since the energies of the anti-abortionists are directed at restricting the rights of women, and especially poor women.

The anti-abortionists' Operation Rescue demonstrations employ civil disobedience to try to close down family planning clinics, but at times the anti-abortionists have turned violent, bombing clinics and assaulting people.

I find it offensive that they compare their efforts to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. That movement sought to extend constitutional rights of all Americans, not to deny women their constitutional right to freedom of choice. The civil rights movement was non-violent, but the right-to-life zealots harass doctors, nurses and patients, and threaten women who have decided to terminate unwanted pregnancies.

Their actions resemble those of the segregationists who taunted African American children trying to enter public schoolrooms, not the dignified civil rights marchers who fought to enlarge people's opportunities and rights.

Another big difference: the civil rights marchers of the 1960s reflected a national consensus that segregation was wrong; the anti-abortion forces of today are opposed to the general American consensus that women have the right to choose to have an abortion.

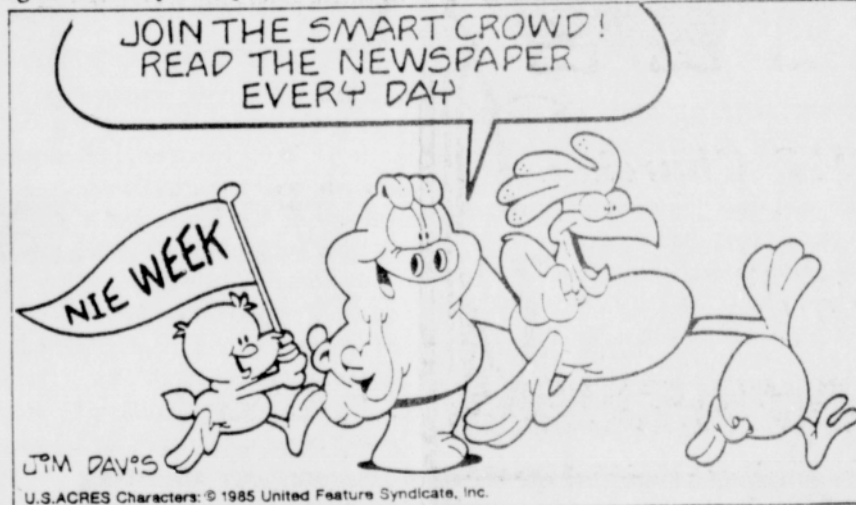
And the right-to-lifers are suspiciously absent when it comes to what happens to children after they are born. They're not out in the streets demonstrating to assure that poor children and teenage mothers get skills, education, decent health care, and housing opportunities.

I have yet to see right-to-lifers exhibit concern about the quality of life for poor children, for pregnant women who want to end their pregnancies for health, economic, or other reasons, or for the consequences for America's poor people of banning abortions. And they've been silent about the kids who are abused, mistreated, warehoused in inadequate institutional settings, and subjected to neglect.

Political leaders ought to recognize the consequences of playing up to the right-to-lifers, too. They need to understand that banning abortion means shifting decisions about a woman's body from the woman herself to politicians and bureaucrats.

And they need to understand that banning abortions will only drive them underground, increase public health problems, and result in countless personal tragedies.

Opponents of abortion are perfectly free to air their views and to try to convince the rest of us. But they shouldn't bully us into giving up constitutionally protected rights to satisfy their personal beliefs.



Celebrate Newspaper in Education Week,
March 6-10, 1989

THE OTHER SIDE

"The Black Press Our Voice In The Labor Movement. A Fact of History"

By Harold Williams

On Sept. 16, 1872 A colored labor convention assembled in Richard, Virginia, with delegates from several districts in the state. The object of this meeting was to secure for Black workers better and more uniform pay. While the national labor organizations had passed into the hands of the politicians, the local unions were still regarded as effective organizations and their efforts were often successful.

There were Black newspapers which were interested in labor questions, and discussions and advices to laborers. The names of several of these papers which were active in labor discussions were: *The Elevator*, San Francisco, California, "edited by a Black man," circulation 2,300 *The Pacific appeal*, published by Blacks, *The New Orleans Tribune* - A daily and weekly, each issue 10,000 copies, managed and edited by Blacks, *The South Carolina Leader*, circulation nearly 1,000 copies, printed and partly edited by Blacks, *The True communicator* - Baltimore, edited by George T. Cook.

Several of these papers were pre-eminently labor organs. As the prospectus of *The Colored Citizen* published by J.P. Sampson and P.H. Murray, there were these words concerning the mission of the paper. It shall advocate labor reform, both in the adjustment of the relations between capital and labor, and in that the colored citizen shall have a fair chance

in the mechanical industry of the country. Editorials frequently appeared in *The New National Era* concerning labor. This paper was the organ of the National Labor Union and its special interest was the labor question. According to its point of view, labor was to the nation the foundation of wealth, prosperity and greatness. As one of its editorials it was stated that the first step in the solution of the labor question was the abolition of slavery, but that the question would not be settled until ignorance, passion, ambitions, selfishness and demagoguery were destroyed. A national committee for the investigation of wages, hours of labor, division of profits, and condition of labor, was advocated. Other editorials on labor included "Industrial Partnership," "True Labor Reform," "The Eight Hour movement," "Labor in Iron Manufactories," "Labor and Tariff," "Labor Unions and Workingmen". These papers were frequently the teachers of those who were reader, concerning the measure of usefulness which Blacks should exert in their communities. They were told that their usefulness depended upon the character of their labor and that the road to comfort was to be found only through constant and patient toil. That is the usage to Black community from the Black Press today. For the battle to plain our fair share is still an important issue of concern today.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL AFRICAN AMERICANS!!

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

For the more than 30 million descendants of African slaves who are citizens of the United States, an interesting debate is now unfolding on how we choose to define ourselves. This self-definition and re-definition has been a struggle in and of itself. The system of racism and oppression in this nation has been very effective in attempting to deny the fundamental right to self-determination. Through the years we have been called and we have called ourselves "colored," "Negro," "Afro-American," and "Black American." Since the days of slavery there have been attempts to unify descendants of Africa around a common nomenclature. Yet the forces of racial oppression have always been opposed to any name that would exude dignity and self-respect to the people of African descent.

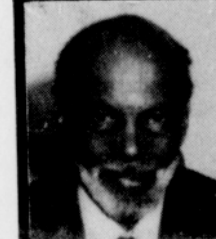
Now, in 1989, twenty years after the Black Power and Black consciousness-raising era, there is a movement afloat to once again achieve a consensus on one terminology. Recently Reverend Jesse Jackson and other civil rights leaders posited that the appropriate term should be African-American. "This is deeper than just name recognition," said Rev. Jackson, adding, "Black tells you about skin color and what side of town you live on. African-American evokes discussion of the world." There are many African American newspapers and radio stations throughout the nation that have already been using this term for more than 10 years. We encourage

the use of the term African American as an appropriate self-affirmation and definition of the descendants of African slaves who are struggling to have citizenship with dignity in this nation. While there are some who disagree with this usage, we believe the current debate is a healthy one because it focuses on history, culture and the responsibility of human self-definition. We join, however, with the comment of Mary Frances Berry, professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, that "this doesn't mean that everything will be wonderful and all the poor people will be taken care of." It is our hope that this new consensus will translate to the vast majority of African Americans in the United States doing more collectively toward eliminating some of the real problems that confront our communities.

Finally, it is our belief that to call ourselves African Americans will send a message to our African sisters and brothers on the continent and throughout the Diaspora that we intend to be a part of the global community, placing a priority on our common African heritage. The future also holds a mutual responsibility for us to be less tolerant of racial injustice in the United States and in Africa, particularly in southern Africa. If the name change does not affect our actions in the struggle for justice and freedom, then it will be another hollow intellectual exercise.

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Perspectives



The Cultural Background For Black History

by McKinley Burt, Historian

Last week this writer presented "The African Presence in Classical Civilization - Greece and Rome" in the Reed College Auditorium. The material included many of the facts cited in this column during the past months. The audience was very receptive and following the lecture there was a very informative exchange of ideas with the group. They were made up of students, professors, staff and visitors. Many of them insisted that the material needed to be published which always has been my intention.

An interesting facet in the technique of presenting new dimensions of Black or African-American history is the fact the one must fist light the stage. You cannot, I repeat cannot just present the facts and the documentation as white historians do. If such is attempted, the presenter will be met with absolute disbelief. He will be assailed from every quarter from media to academia. Such a reaction is observed despite the fact that so much of the written record had been chisled in stone or etched in papyri. A case in point is a "They Came Before Columbus," written by the African American professor, Ivan van Sertima of Rutgers University. It was not accepted by the American establishment until it had been hailed by the Europeans.

One of the techniques used in my lectures and also in more detailed articles which cannot be accommodated by a newspaper column is to establish that there exists within our society a general cultural and intellectual capacity for making significant contributions. This type of approach makes it much easier to introduce specific African American innovations, the kind that otherwise would provoke shock and disbelief.

For an example, 4,000 years ago we find that many important schools and libraries existed in Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia. They were supported by endowment funds and elaborate income tax structures. Each year a certain percentage of the farmers' harvest was taxed for the support of these institutions as well as to finance other governmental

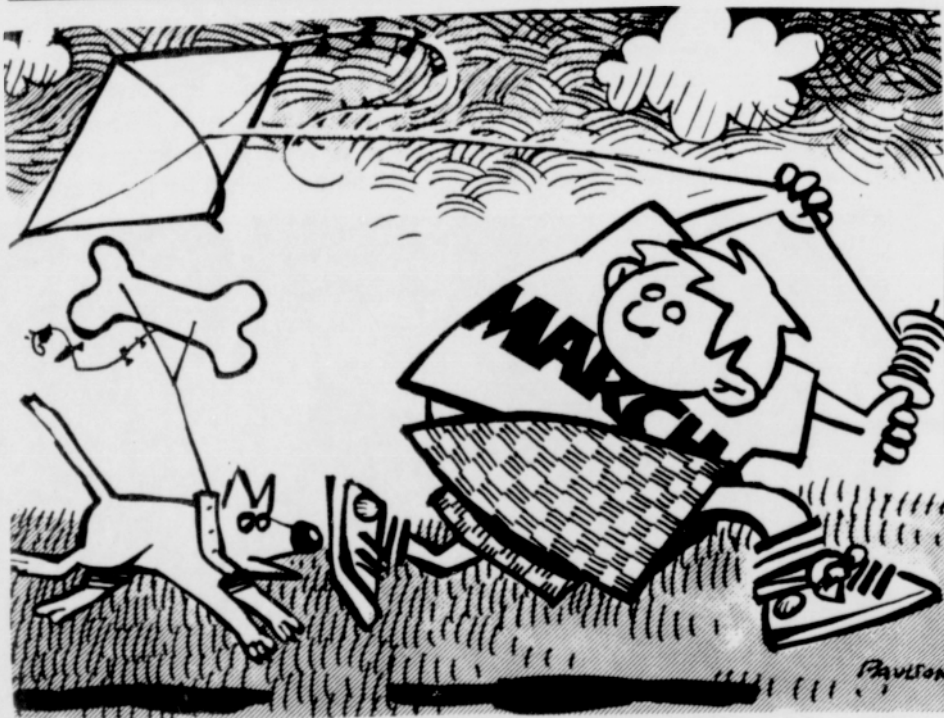
services. So it can be seen that this type of modern infrastructure did not originate in either Greece or Rome but in Black Africa. It also is found that the tax collectors used very advanced mathematics to determine the quantity of grain stored in such odd-shaped structures such as tetrahedrons and pyramids as indicated in the Rhind papyrus.

In contradiction to the horror stories of slave labor in Egypt and the Sudan, recent excavations reveal extensive, quality urban housing next to the vast building projects of pyramid, temple or canal. Workers' quarters were multi-room with kitchen and bathroom. The forman's residence would even have a patio and garden. Compare with the facilities given America's Black slaves 4000 years later (or compare with some of the urban squalor or homelessness found in this country's innercities).

Administrative records on stone or papyri show that the workers had unions and that they called strikes to protest pay issues (including bonuses due for offerings to be made to the gods). Graffiti found on quarry slabs show that the workers had a lively sense of humor and that a great deal of goodnatured kidding went on between different work gangs and between shifts. Gangs might be named "the high-risers," or "the lazy ones," and some graffiti might complain that the swing shift did not clean up after their work.

NEXT WEEK: More about Culture and Administration

Erratum: The last article published in this series stated incorrectly that Howard Latimer, inventor of the incandescent light bulb filament died in 1976. The article should have stated that David Crosthwait, the world's foremost heating and air conditioning engineer died on that date. Both of these African Americans made great contributions to the advancement of the world's technology. It is very fitting that they be remembered and honored by all mankind.



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