

EDITORIAL / OPINION

Perspectives

You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet

by Professor
McKinley Burt



Well folks, I was right on time again-- with my recitation of problems for Black youth in Oregon Higher Education. A front page lead in last Thursday's Oregonian screamed, "Industry Panel Calls For Shutting Portland State University." As promised, I will continue here with descriptions of "not untypical racist behavior" at this school, but will address later this new unmitigated disaster for Portland Youth, Black or white.

Do not let the selection of PSU as the site for a two-day "symposium On Racism and Harassment" lead you to think that the meeting is being domiciled at an institution of a liberal bent. To the contrary, I stated last week that my 12 years of faculty experience there made me oh so cognizant that "faculty prejudice and games can retard or destroy a student--and can spill over into non-academic areas which are equally critical to a student's performance and psyche.

A bright Black female student called at my office in tears. A white sociology professor was forcing her to **rewrite her term paper for the fourth time**. It turned out that there was "nothing really wrong" with her work except that the instructor was writing a textbook on **ghetto life** and needed to quote a Black in a context which would support the thesis he was advancing. When I made the man aware of my intention to pursue the matter all the way to the top, he relented--but the best grade this student could ever earn thereafter was a B. This woman is now a top attorney in New York and Washington, D.C.

Also not uncommon was the experience of my secretary who was an education major with Art as a minor. This white female came back to the office enraged because her instructor had trashed her art project on **Olmec Statues in Mexico**, insisting that the huge heads "only looked African." And that this was because they had toppled over, **flattening the lips and noses** (stone with a hardness index equal to granite). My secretary knew better because she had been abstracting notes for a lesson plan from Ivan Van Sertima's book, "They Came Before Columbus"--a well-documented, internationally recognized tome that used text and **photographs** to detail the early presence of Africans in the Americas. (as had National Geographic Magazine and the New York Times).

Mr. Van Sertima was brought here several times from Rutgers University as one of the principal consultants to the school district's Desegregation Plan. It was to no avail that the student brought back to her art class a world of documentation--"Niggers

were in Africa until we brought 'em over." There were to be no decent grades out of that class for the rest of the year. It was a weekly thing that I had to deal with issues of this nature in support of students, even having to go to war with the Athletic Department because an attractive, (Straight A) Black girl was thrown off the Rally Squad because she "looked out of place" ("and besides, her rear end isn't made right").

These types of events could be cited ad infinitum and speak directly to an overall atmosphere which, without intervention, can work a deadly attrition upon minorities. We have, too, the problem of professional support in the classroom, especially in Science, Business and Economics. Without an equality of effort directed at all students, you soon find a number of minority students switching to soft courses this leads to **soft degrees** in an age where meaningful employment is going to be in the sciences and technology. Here, I refer to those supporting classroom activities where a student is encouraged (aided) to interface with professionals and organizations related to the student's discipline. This type of input and networking is essential to full professional growth. These functions may often be cleverly disguised (or unannounced to most minorities) but you can bet that in some way institutional resources and time are involved. Your taxes!

Now, for that headline, "Shutting down P.S.U." My files indicate that for the past two decades Portland State University has requested and gotten tens of millions of dollars for "expansion of structure and department to serve an increasingly important Portland Metropolitan Statistical Area (Tri-Counties) which has been dangerously neglected because of an unfair and unrealistic concentration of educational resources at two rural universities at Eugene and Corvallis." What type of gaming is this--from an electronics industry whose economic ineptitude (stupidity?) allowed the Japanese to walk in and take over a field in which America was long preeminent?

Believe me, somewhere in the bill of particulars is an intent to divert hundreds of millions in taxpayer's dollars to fund corporate expansion (or survival), plans that include research and development, employee training, and other **profit-oriented** activities traditionally found in company budgets (at least Chrysler only borrowed the money). The second point, of course, is how devastating the suggested manipulations would be to the educational opportunities for minorities. Perhaps I hedged the other week. Perhaps we do need a **Black Higher Education Task Force** -- Yesterday!

VANTAGE POINT

by Ron Daniels

Statehood Would End D.C.'s Colonial Status

On October 27, George Bush vetoed the budget to Washington, D.C. because of his objection to monies within the budget for economically disadvantaged women seeking to avoid unwanted pregnancies. The President thus was able to keep his pledge to anti-abortion forces. Meanwhile the District of Columbia has been thrown into a fiscal crisis because the President of the United States has rejected its 3.4 billion dollar budget. Increased allocations for the drug war including more monies for education, counseling, treatment and additional police have been nullified by the President's displeasure with a particular provision within the budget. Meanwhile the drug crisis continues to engulf the nation's capital.

One is compelled to ask, why does the President have the right to veto the budget of the District of Columbia. The answer is that the District is virtually a colony inside of these United States. In fact, not only the budget, but each and every law passed by the District Council and signed by the Mayor is subject to final review and approval by the Congress and the President. The District's elected representatives do not have the final say of the ultimate authority to govern the district. The council and Mayor are reduced, in effect, to a colonial advisory body to Congress and the President. Indeed, the District does not even have a voting representative in Congress, instead it has a "non-voting Delegate."

Of the 115 nations that have elected national legislative bodies, only the United States deprives the citizens of its Capital from having voting representation in its national legislature. And no other major western democracy has a system where the President can veto a budget passed by the duly elected representatives of the governing bodies within the Capital district. The citizens of Ottawa, Paris, London, Rome, etc. have a full right to participate in the political affairs of their respective nations. Only in America are the citizens of the Capital treated like colonial subjects.

The District of Columbia has a population of around 650,000 citizens, which is larger than the states of Alaska, Vermont, and Wyoming. The District's population is about the same as the states of Nevada, north Dakota and South Dakota. It contributes in excess of 1 billion dollars to the federal treasury which is an amount larger

than that contributed by 9 states. A sizeable portion of the 3.4 billion dollar budget for fiscal Year 1990 is derived from the District's taxes and revenues. And yet the District via its council and Mayor cannot spend its dollars as it deems necessary and appropriate. The question is why?

Historically the District of Columbia was carved out of the states of Virginia and Maryland in order to provide a safe haven for America's seat of government. It seems that the founding fathers had some anxieties about the citizens of the new found republic possibly holding the leaders of the nation hostage. Because of these fears of the people, the District of Columbia was created with no clear provisions for self-government or home rule. Between 1800-1968 various forms of governance structures were tried in the District. With the exception of brief period during Reconstruction, none of these forms of government permitted the citizens to elect their own representatives. "Citizens" from the District were even denied the right to vote for President! Over the years the issue of home rule has been a hot one in the District. It has not been lost on many students of this issue that one of the problems has been the fact that the District has always had a large Black and working class population.

Because of mounting pressures from the people, citizens of the District won the "privilege" to elect their own school board members and the privilege to vote for the President during the sixties. Congress also bestowed upon the citizens the privilege of voting for council, the Mayor and a non-voting delegate to Congress. These limited gains however, fall far short of full home rule and self-government for the citizens of the District of Columbia. And under the current arrangements even these limited privileges can be wiped out by the Congress at will. Clearly a different and more fully democratic system is required to end D.C. colonial status.

The solution that people like Councilwoman Hilda Mason, D.C. Delegate Walter Fauntroy and most recently Jesse Jackson have been calling for is statehood. If states like Alaska, Vermont, Wyoming, Nevada, North Dakota, and South Dakota can have a Governor, 2 Senators and voting representatives in Congress, then why not change the status of the District of Columbia from colony to a full state within the American Union.

PORTLAND OBSERVER

"The Eyes and Ears of the Community"

Office: (503) 288-0033

FAX #: (503) 288-0015

Civil Rights Journal

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Houston, Texas: Remember Mickey Leland's Legacy

Most of the global community continues to uplift with deep respect the contributions of Congressman Mickey Leland for his commitment to ending world hunger and for promoting goodwill throughout the world, particularly in Africa. Leland's tragic death in Ethiopia from an airplane crash while on an humanitarian relief mission has caused not only thousands to grieve the tragedy, but also now to envision appropriate ways to memorialize the legacy of Mickey Leland.

We support the recent efforts of Houston City Councilman, Rodney Ellis, to rename the Houston Intercontinental Airport in honor of Mickey Leland. If there is any place in the United States where a lasting tribute should be made for Leland, it should be in his home city, Houston, Texas.

It is however truly shocking that Councilman Ellis has now come under undue criticism for daring to make such a suggestion. At a time when the younger generation of today needs to be shown positive role models of achievement and social consciousness, the legacy of Mickey Leland needs to be lifted up not only for African-American youth, but for all youth in the nation.

In particular, we condemn the recent remarks by Houston City Councilman, Jim Westmoreland. Last month, during a City Council meeting, Mr. Westmoreland uttered a racial slur in connection with the proposal to rename Houston Intercontinental Airport for Leland. Westmoreland, with an attitude of racist arrogance, went to the press table at the City Council meeting and stated, "We should just name it Nigger International." This kind of blatant disregard for Mickey Leland's lifelong commitment to human rights and racial justice is a grievous insult to the Leland family, the African-American community and to the entire human family.

Westmoreland should be asked to resign from the City Council of Houston, Texas. How can this man continue to sit in a high office of responsibility while mouthing such an insult full of the whole history of American racism. The Washington Post reported that Westmoreland has now claimed that he was only joking and that he would not resign stating, "I don't have one racist bone in my body."

Mr. Eugene Hawthorne, a local insurance executive who attended a City Council hearing on the Westmoreland controversy stated, "a racial slur like that is repugnant, not just to Black people in Houston and Texas, but people everywhere. And I am afraid it wasn't just a joke, not just an isolated comment. I am afraid he was reflecting the white's true feelings about Mickey Leland and Black people. Praise them if they die, but try to forget about them." Councilman Ellis agreed, "It got real ugly... Mickey certainly deserves a better legacy than this."

The memory of Mickey Leland will ultimately not be tarnished by the racial slurs of Jim Westmoreland. But what is at issue here is the deep-seated racial hatred and animosity that continues in our society. Racism is not a joking phenomenon. It is one of the most deadly threats to the wholeness of the fabric of the nation. That is why racist slurs like this must not go unchallenged in Houston or anywhere else.

People across the country should first communicate their support for Councilman Ellis' recommendation concerning renaming the airport for Leland. Secondly, Westmoreland should be censured and removed from office. But most important, we all should not let Houston or the world forget the contributions of Mickey Leland toward worldwide peace, justice and human dignity.

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THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

A Tribute To Reverend Al Sharpton

Reverend Al Sharpton is deeply respected in the African-American working class community; our people know that he is not afraid to stand up to the white Powers That Be on our behalf. For exactly the same reason many black leaders are wary of Reverend Sharpton, just as they are wary of Minister Louis Farrakhan. Establishment Black leaders are used to being told--from the columns of the white corporate-owned media, from the official pronouncements of the white Democratic Party leadership, from the pulpits of "liberal" white clergymen--who is legitimate, who is acceptable, who among us is "a credit to our race" AND WHO IS NOT. They are used to being told which leaders it is alright to be close to, and which to avoid--or denounce.

Like Minister Farrakhan, Al Sharpton is an illegitimate Black leader in the eyes of the Power That Be. Why do they hate him? The explanation is simple: he doesn't dance to their tune. His loyalty is, first and foremost, to the Black community. For this "crime," Reverend Sharpton has come under heavy attack from the white political and media establishments in New York. Governor Mario Cuomo, "Mr. Democratic Party liberal," has said publicly that he wishes Reverend Sharpton were dead. He is currently being prosecuted in the courts as a "tax evader." The corporate media, conducting a campaign of vilification against him, have "exposed" Reverend Sharpton as a police informant and echoed the slander that he is an "anti-Semite."

Phony exposes are part of a long tradition in the effort to intimidate and punish independent Black leaders. They did it to Marcus Garvey. They did it to Adam Clayton Powell. They did it to Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr. and to Malcolm and to the Black Panthers. They are doing it to Minister Farrakhan. The purpose of such tactics is to scare Black leaders into silence and inaction. If that doesn't work, the lies and slander prepare the way for violence...

Those Black leaders who crave legitimacy (and the privileges that come from it) have kept their distance from Reverend Sharpton -- as they do from Minister Farrakhan -- in order not to be tarred by the same brush. They have refused to stand up with him and for him. Some of them have even fallen for the divide-and-conquer tactics that were used in the past to destroy the Black liberation movement by pitting Black leaders against one another; they have joined in the chorus of ridicule and repudiation, to establish their own credentials as "respectable" and "trustworthy" Black leaders.

Through all of this Al Sharpton has stood by his principles and by our people. He has not become less militant or less outspoken -- just the opposite. The Black working class knows who he is, loves him for it, and follows where he leads. An illegitimate "troublemaker" -- to the Powers That Be, Al Sharpton is a working class hero in the eyes of our people.

Most recently, Reverend Sharpton led thousands of young Black people into the streets of New York City to express their revolutionary outrage over the lynch mob-style murder of yet another black child, Yusuf Hawkins.

Over the years Reverend Sharpton and I have worked closely together. In March of 1987 I joined him in a march on the state capital in Albany to protest the rising tide of racial violence in which Black people -- young men like Michael Stewart, Nicholas

Bartlett and Michael Griffith, as well as grandmothers like Eleanor Bumpurs -- were drowning, and to demand that the state legislature make the racially motivated murder of Blacks and Latinos carry a mandatory life sentence.

On Memorial Day of that year we were marching together again -- this time down Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn -- to protest the murder of a 21-year-old Black man by a white police officer.

Together we raised our voices to demand justice for our young sister Tawana Brawley, who was driven out of New York as if she were a criminal -- when in fact she was the victim of a gang of racists and rapists.

When I brought 5,000 people to Atlanta last summer to demonstrate our support for Reverend Jesse Jackson and my Two Roads Are Better Than One plan outside the Democratic Party nominating convention, Reverend Sharpton and busloads of his supporters were there with us.

And when I was not allowed to participate in the nationally televised Presidential debates last fall, Reverend Sharpton -- who endorsed my independent candidacy for President of the United States -- came to Winston-Salem, North Carolina to lead the protest against my exclusion.

Now he is demanding that I be included in New York's mayoral candidate debates -- to guarantee that our people have a voice in the upcoming election.

I am very proud to be a Black leader who follows the leadership of Reverend Al Sharpton. He is an independent Black leader who refuses to sell himself to the Powers That Be -- because he has given himself to the Black working class.

Governor Goldschmidt Honors Unsung Heroes

Nearly 1000 people joined Governor Goldschmidt Tuesday night to honor nine of Oregon's "unsung heroes" at the second annual Gold Schmidt Awards Gala, the Governor's ceremony recognizing outstanding community service.

The awards, designed by Will Vinton Productions, were presented by Susan Rutan, former Oregonian and current star of NBC-TV's L.A. Law; and Jack McGowan, former host of P.M. Magazine.

"Tonight, we honor men and women who might not make the front pages, but whose efforts are making this state a better place in which to live," McGowan said.

The honorees were Tessie Williams, a community health-care advocate for the Umatilla Tribes; Judie Neilson, founder of the "Get The Drift--And Bag It" coastal clean-up campaign; Tony Hopson and Ray Leary, co-directors of the Self-Enhancement program for the youth of Northeast Portland; Dr. Robert and Mavis Bomengen, founders and organizers of "Fridays," a teen club in Lakeview; Elsie Stuhr, founder of the Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District; and Bill and Sam Naito, Portland businessmen whose ideas helped transform downtown Portland from a dying area to a thriving center of retail commerce and historic preservation.

Music by the George Reinmiller Big Band, performances by Shirley Nanette, David Frishberg, LINN, and a rap written and performed by Jack McGowan and Democratic National Committeeman Gerry Cogan entertained guests.

Former Governor Bob Straub joined other well-known Oregon celebrities, from sports figures to artists to community leaders, in honoring the award winners. The event was a benefit for the Re-Elect Governor Neil Goldschmidt Committee.

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