

Vantage Point

By Ron Daniels

The Politics of Race Threatens Black Progress

George Bush and the Republican Party are at it again. In 1988 the Republican Party used Willie Horton as an image to exploit the fears, anxieties and prejudices of white voters. With an eye on the 1992 election, a "kinder gentler" George Bush is searching for another image or symbol which can produce the Willie Horton effect. The new code word is racial quotas. Bush is vehemently denouncing the revised and watered down Civil Rights Act of 1991 as a "Quota Bill." Bush vetoed the Civil Rights Act of 1990 and the 1991 Bill now faces a similar fate. Attacking civil rights and affirmative action has become good politics.

This latest episode of political opportunism by President Bush is reflective of a growing erosion of national will as it relates to civil rights for African Americans and other minorities. The recent campaigns of David Duke and Jesse Helms showed significant evidence of this trend. Political analysts tactics and strategies might play well in the '92 presidential election. What they found is that a sizable segment of White America has apparently grown weary of civil rights and affirmative action. Many whites now feel that Black progress is being made through policies and programs which unfairly give Blacks an advantage over whites. Hence the perception is that Black progress is being at the expense of whites.

The massive problems still plaguing and retarding the progress of large numbers of African Americans is no longer seen as a circumstance that requires legislative remedies. It is increasingly clear that a majority within White America does not view the resolution of America's longstanding crisis in race relations in terms of Blacks

achieving equity and parity within the U.S. system. With the most visible indignities of segregation having been wiped out and with the impression that Blacks have made substantial progress in terms of education, jobs and political power, much of White America believes that any problems which Blacks now suffer are not the result of racism or structural inequalities but are due to defects in the culture and character of Black people.

Unfortunately the U.S. educational system, which is based on a "curriculum of exclusion" and omission, in the main, still leaves white Americans ignorant of the traumatic history of Africans in America. White America does not understand Black America. In hard economic times when whites and Blacks are forced to compete for scarce jobs and other opportunities, this lack of understanding can readily turn to outright hostility.

For more than a decade the U.S. economy has been in a state of perpetual crisis. The troubled U.S. economy has produced a fertile environment to nurture the politics of race. Ronald Reagan exploited this environment to capture the White House in 1980. Reagan gave legitimacy to the politics of race by viciously attacking affirmative action and promoting such concepts as "Black racism" and "reverse discrimination." The Reagan-Bush administration began to use the office of the Attorney General and other agencies not to promote and enforce civil rights laws and statutes but to protect whites against civil rights enforcement. The Reagan-Bush administration set the tone for the resurgence of overt racism and racial antagonism. And this has worked to the advantage of the Republican Party and their wealthy allies.

The pro-rich policies of Reagan-Bush administration produced an unprecedented concentration on wealth in the hands of a few at the top of the economic pyramid. The rich got much richer while the poor got much poorer. It was/is quite convenient for the Republicans to use Blacks and minorities as scapegoats for economic policies which resulted in gross prosperity for a few and misery for millions. The Republicans can be expected to continue to fan the flames of fear and reaction as a means of retaining power and privilege. The "quota" issue plays well with beleaguered whites with misplaced racial antagonism.

Meanwhile the Democratic Party seems impotent to cope with the Republican advantage in terms of the politics of race. While seeking to retain the allegiance of Blacks and minorities by supporting civil rights legislation, the Democrats have failed to use their support for civil rights to educate the American public on the adverse impact of persistent racism on Blacks and minorities and the entire nation. The Democrats fear that being too forthright on civil rights could alienate white voters who could help the Democrats in their bid for the White House in '92.

In any event, the politics of race will influence the considerations of both parties and poison the atmosphere in terms of Black progress for the foreseeable future. African Americans must brace for some very difficult times ahead. With white "good will" evaporating in the face of economic hard times and political demagoguery, African Americans must be prepared to maximize Black political and economic resources to effectively promote and protect Black interests and a progressive Black agenda as never before.

Legislature Is To Blame (The demise of alcohol, drug services)

EDITORIAL TAKEN FROM STATESMAN JOURNAL (MAY 23, 1991)

Let the 1991 Legislature stand warned: It is to blame if Oregon's alcohol and drug services continue their plunge while crime, health problems, and family turmoil rise.

We join with Rep. Kevin Mannix, D-Salem, in condemning the House leadership for not allowing a committee to consider a bill that would raise beer and wine taxes to pay for drug and alcohol and treatment programs.

The money that Oregon loses in crime, broken families, lifelong health problems, and human misery dwarfs by billions of dollars the few extra cents that Oregonians would pay for a bottle of beer or a glass of wine.

House Speaker Larry Campbell is the man behind the roadblock. In many ways we agree with some of his argu-

ments. The public wants government to cut spending, not increase taxes; sin taxes are too easy a target for anyone who wants money for a special interest, regardless of its worth.

But what Campbell and other critics ignore is that Mannix wants to impose the tax on the very product that causes the problem that we need money to fix.

A tax on alcohol is the ultimate user-or abuser-tax. If we don't tax alcohol to provide alcohol and drug treatment programs and to pay for the damage alcohol does, where do we get the money? From the public's income taxes?

That's not fair. Let those who contribute to the problem help pay for solving it.

The money raised by House Bill 2587 would go to treatment and prevention programs conducted by state agencies, counties, and cities, tripling the amount of money available to fight

the war on drugs and alcohol.

Alcohol and drug dependence probably is the state's main social, education, and criminal justice problem.

Nearly 80 percent of men and women arrested on felony charges had been using illicit drugs. Families with addicted adults have eight times the health-care costs of normal families. State agencies spend millions of dollars on welfare payments, unemployment benefits, and other services for individuals and families caught in the turmoil caused by alcohol and drug addiction.

Thousands want help and can't get it. In 1990, 1,806 adolescents and 7,409 adults were turned away from treatment programs.

The most depressing statistic on drug and alcohol abuse is not yet clear, and that's the fate of children born to mothers who used alcohol or drugs. Only now are we seeing a surge in the number of drug-addicted babies. Many of them will need costly medical help and special schooling for the rest of their lives.

Oregon's tax on beer and wine has not been increased in 14 years. Even keeping up with inflation would have more than doubled the tax. If we forced the liquor industry to pay totally for all the damage its product does to society, the tax per ounce would be counted in dollars, not in a few cents. Mannix's bill lets the industry off easy.

The public wants help, and HB 2587 is a good way of providing it. We urge members of the House Business and Community Affairs Committee, or the House itself, to take matters into their own hands if necessary and send this bill to the Senate and to Gov. Barbara Roberts.

It can save money and lives.

Commissioner To Introduce Civil Rights Advisory Council

Labor Commissioner Mary Wendy Roberts introduced her Advisory Council on Civil Rights at a news conference today, Wednesday, June 19. Council Chair Dr. Rodney Page of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon announced the group's goals.

Roberts formed the statewide Council to advise her on civil and human rights issues and make recommendations to her about possible legislation and enforcement practices.



Perspectives

By Professor McKinley Burt

Show And Tell

A reader supplied the title for this week's article when my brief mention of the "Atlanta Exposition" provoked her comment that African Americans have to do a better job of "showing and telling our genius." Nobody is going to do it for us." She, too, was depressed at our pitiful showing in the graduation ceremonies at Oregon Universities, especially in the sciences. Let me repeat that thought-provoking citation.

"100 years ago blacks put on the 'Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition', September 18, 1895 (see the Congressional record, 53rd Congress, Second Session, p. 8382). People from all over the world came to see and buy the inventions of African American engineers, stoves locomotives, steam engines, improvements to farm, factory and railroad. Can it happen again?"

Now, isn't that unbelievable? That a century ago we were not only "demonstrating" our technical genius but also doing an adept and sophisticated job of publicizing our abilities to all the world. Not to mention developing an effective structure for financial gain. It was not lost upon our reader that were African Americans creating similar "stages" today for their wares and innovations, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT would take on new meaning for the race. Her further comment was that it went without saying, "Complete new avenues for the technical education and motivation of our youth would be opened up."

Again, we are reminded of how dependent we are upon the perceptions and commitment of the black female if we are to succeed in the struggle to "regain" a credible position in the scheme of things. I would immediately remind you of the description I gave here several years ago of the 1978 West Coast meeting of the Black Scientists and Engineers which I attended as a representative of Portland State University. The convention was designed and

implemented by two black female engineers. It was a marvel of operational structure, logistics and telecommunications. And YOUTH WAS SERVED as scores upon scores of black youth were flown in to be entranced and motivated by the inventions of the black engineers.

For the moment, let us return to that 1895 "Atlanta Exposition." It would seem that most of our readers identified that great event only with that famous speech opening day by Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee fame - certainly not with the greatest exposition ever of black technical (and cultural) genius. This was the occasion of the frequently quoted admonition, "LET DOWN YOUR BUCKET WHERE YOU ARE," and "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps." Along with this advice that the races could accomplish much while remaining "as separate as the fingers on your hand," Washington pleased the whites but earned the undying enmity of W.E.B. Dubois and the black intellectual-integrationist movement (voting and accommodations).

As stated, this aspect of the Exposition is the one that has been impressed upon the consciousness of American blacks and whites alike - and not the yeoman efforts of African Americans from every walk of life to make the spectacle possible in the first place. We need not wonder, do we, why racists, Uncle Toms (and the brainwashed) have not dwelled upon the wonderful, positive nature of the greatest "Show and Tell" in our history.

That citation to the Congressional Record is for the August 10, 1894 speech by BLACK CONGRESSMAN, GEORGE H. MURRAY from South Carolina, an ex-slave who spent two years at the State University until all blacks were expelled in 1876. Elected in 1892, we have him here addressing his colleagues in soliciting federal support

for the Atlanta Exposition. He was successful and his own eight patented agricultural inventions were displayed.

"We have proven in almost every line that we are capable of doing what other people can do. We have proven that we can work as much and as well as other people. We have proven that we can learn as well as other people. We have proven that we can fight as well as other people, as was demonstrated in the late [Civil] war. There are still, however, traducers and slanderers of our race who claim that we are not equal to others because we have failed to produce inventors..."

"...I hold in my hand a statement prepared by one of the assistants in the Patent Office, showing the inventions that have been made by colored men within the past few years..."

This statement shows that colored men have taken out patents upon almost everything, from a cooking stove to a locomotive. Patents have been granted to colored men for inventions and improvements in the workshop, on the farm, in the factory, on the railroad, in the mine, in almost every department of labor, and some of the most important improvements that go to make up that great motive power of modern industrial machinery, the steam engine, have been produced by colored men..."

"...Mr. Speaker, the colored people of this country want an opportunity to show that the progress, that the civilization which is now admired the world over, that the civilization which is now leading the world, that the civilization which all the nations of the world look up to an imitate - the colored people, I say, want an opportunity to show that they, too, are part and parcel of that great civilization..."

And there was also the "Paris Exposition" of 1906 and the "Emancipation Exposition" at Philadelphia in 1913.

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Older Adult Abuse

Now I am a man and I live with my granny,
And do to my granny what she did to me.
An old English rhyme

Taken from "Omnibus," Presbytery of the Cascades.

Older Adult Abuse is a nationwide problem, touching all of our lives. It is not a new problem, but it has a far greater impact on our population than many of us would like to believe. The signs of neglect, abuse, and exploitation, must be learned and used to protect older adults and perhaps - even yourself.

What is Older Adult Abuse?
Abuse means the willful infliction of physical pain or injury on an elderly person. This includes unreasonable confinement, sexual misconduct, and oversedation, as well as many other abuses.

Material Abuse means the misuse of an elderly person's property or financial resources.

Neglect means a significant danger to an elderly person's physical or mental health because the person who takes care of the elder person is unable or fails to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, or medical or dental care.

Self Neglect means a significant danger to an elderly person's physical or mental health because the elder person is responsible for his or her own care but is unable to provide food, shelter, clothing, or medical or dental care.

Who is Likely to be Abused?
Abuse can happen to anyone but research has found that certain categories are more susceptible to it. Statistics sharply increase when a combination of these categories apply. The categories are:

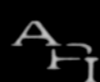
Frail elderly above the age of 70. Suffer physical handicap, Alzheimer's Disease or other dementia, or other medical condition.

Caregiver(s) suffers from drug misuse, alcohol misuse, or depression.

What Services Are Available for Preventive Intervention?

Home nursing care aid, meal delivery services, home repair services, home visitor services, monetary assistance, older adult care, respite care centers, transportation services, counseling, mental health services, and others, depending on the area. These services are provided sometimes by church congregations, by the city, county or state Councils on Aging, by The American Association of Retired Persons, or by a combination of all of those listed.

CHILDREN MAY BE OUR budding resource for the future, but it is our senior citizens who are truly the key to family heritage. They are history; a living history that can be passed from generation to generation. Their lives are a constant testimony to knowledge, experience, commitment, wisdom, passion and patience. For all they have given and continue to give, older adults deserve our respect and compassion. Make an effort to thank a grandmother, learn a skill from a great uncle, see that your son knows about his grandfather, be there to listen to your mother's opinions. Involve yourself to enrich the living history we are making each day. Older adults' hindsight is our foresight to the future.



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