

EDITORIAL

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

North Carolina Plan Upheld--Not Necessarily A Victory

A redistricting plan that created two black majority congressional districts in NC was acknowledged to be "racial gerrymandering" by a three judge appeals court--but it was held to be constitutional! The 2-to-1 ruling turned back a challenge by five white voters who sued the state, saying its redrawing of congressional districts should be declared unconstitutional. The Court said, "We find that the plan's lines were deliberately drawn to produce one or more districts of a certain racial composition and that it is thus a 'racial gerrymander' subject to strict scrutiny, but we none the less conclude that the plan passes constitutional muster under that standard because it is narrowly tailored to further the state's compelling interest in complying with the Voting Rights Act..."

The language in this decision is a source of great concern. The lawsuit was initially dismissed, but upon appeal the Supreme Court revived it in *Shaw v. Reno*, saying the shapes of the districts resembled racial gerrymandering or political apartheid. The panel's decision approvingly uses the terms "racial gerrymander", which the High Court opposes; and uses the terms "deliberately drawn", which is another way of saying the VRA encourages intentional racial gerrymandering. Such language may in fact be a setup to virtually insure that the Supreme Court will, if not invalidate the Voting Rights Act, at least make it ineffective.

In the Louisiana case, the court said racial gerrymandering was unconstitutional. In a state 30% black, only two congresspersons have been elected since Reconstruction. The first Louisiana plan, 65% Black and 35% White, was drawn in 1992 and thrown out in December, 1993. The second plan, 55% Black and 45% White, was redrawn in April 1994, and thrown out last Thursday. The third plan, created by a federal judicial panel dominated by Reagan and Bush appointees last week, created a new 4th district, 70% White and 30% African American. The new map effectively eliminates Cong. Cleo Fields (D-LA-4th) and insures the election of a Republican. The two conflicting opinions insure appeals.

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BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

She was an easy target. Poor, uneducated, powerless, she couldn't fight back.

So when Ronald Reagan turned the wrath of America on mothers on welfare by labeling them "welfare queens" and pointing out to the infrequent cases of welfare fraud and abuse, the welfare mother and her dependent children could not fight back. Portrayed as people who were free-loaders, lazy, irresponsible women with low morals, mothers on welfare could not fight back. Now, fifteen years later, the mother who supports her family with Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) still has not been able to overcome that stereotyping and that scapegoating.

Let me be very clear. There is something wrong with the welfare system as we have come to know it in America. Whole families should not spend two or three generations on welfare. And contrary to some beliefs, being on welfare is not easy. Being on welfare only ensures that a child will be able to survive in poverty. It is demeaning and demoralizing to the mother and does not give her children an equal chance.

Let it also be clear that there is

perspectives

Is Minority Business Still "Show Business"?

That's the question a feature writer for a national weekly news magazine asked me last week. It seems that a major article this winter will be along the lines of "Whatever Happened To Minority Business?" I addressed that question in these very pages several years ago--particularly Portland.

In a wide-ranging conversation we had an excellent interchange and were able to intimately explore some subject matter not frequently addressed. He had been directed to me by a fellow member of the 'Association of Oregon Industries' with whom I serve on a committee; an industry CEO who in the 1970s had served with me on the Business School faculty at Portland State University.

It was interesting that no African American had suggested me as a relevant contact, though many are involved in "Minority Business", took my classes and/or received counseling in 'real time' enterprise formation. As a matter of fact, the two most visible practitioners of this commercial art form took every class I taught in the field. I can understand it, for there is no telling what I might say--though my observations will certainly be valid and experienced-based.

The magazine writer had already made contact with local white

media and was aware of a forthcoming article on "Korean-American Entrepreneurs" (see The Oregonian for 8/4/94, E6). He commented on a scenario he found consistent across the county--a sometimes violent antipathy between the Asian merchants and their black clientele (include Vietnamese in some areas). I have written extensively on this subject, but have never gotten the response that I desired or expected.

This may very well be because I did not address the issue in fiery man-the-barri-cades or "Sic em" rhetoric. What I did was make clear that the business organization and financing structure employed by the Asians at this level has been available to American blacks in many areas for well over a hundred years; generations before many Asians heard of America-level some blacks have developed and exploited the lower-level economic opportunities 'permitted' them (mostly in the south), there has been a miserable and obvious failure to pursue the cooperative modes described in the Oregonian article.

I expect immediate wails and excuses: "We don't have that kind of money they mention, \$40,000, \$90,000". That is a lie! We have always had it. When I came to Portland in 1945 African Americans had millions in businesses and real estate. Much of it had been assembled over time in "southern style", now called "Asian Style". Organizations of black worker like the pullman

porters, dining care waiters, red cups, post office employees, etc. pooled their money five and ten dollars a week until they could pay down on various properties and equipment. I handled the accounting for most of these organizations so I know these to be the facts. Today the Koreans call this type of cooperation and mutual support "Keh"--based on trust and friendship.

So what has happened some younger people may ask? Where are the black cleaners, full-service contractors, coin machine vendors (cigarettes-Juke boxes), apartment complexes, etc.--what happened to them? It is interesting that, now, younger blacks (and whites) in Northeast are asking pointed questions; they are no longer accepting, "well whitey came up with 'Urban Renewal' like he did other cities to wipe out black progress." They ask in turn, "Didn't we have any black lawyers who could be marshalled against this--or at least negotiate a reasonable compensation? Couldn't they have brought in some people with backbone?"

A lot of the northeast populace are tired hearing the old Uncle Tom tune, "There's No Business Like Show Business" They ask, "who buys the leaders, how could the Fred Meyer and other properties have gotten away? What happened to the Alberta Street Development Plan--what's the net dollar investment to date? The youth have no success stories or role models. They are in the street dying, while rascals prosper.

To Be Continued.



By
Professor
Mckinley
Burt



Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to: Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

I am a physician who works full-time within the Oregon Department of Corrections. I am appalled at the unnecessary expense associated with the present policy which allows smoking by prisoners.

The Supreme Court ruled that there is no constitutional right for prisoners to smoke. They have also ruled that the prison system must provide medical care to all inmates, and that withholding treatment is equivalent to cruel and unusual punishment. Finally, they have ruled that prisoners have a right to a smoke free environment.

Smoking is well known to cause illness. Prisoners are allowed to

smoke even when they have significant conditions potentially complicated by smoking: asthmatics continue to smoke, knowing that they can demand ever more expensive treatments, even hospitalization; heart attack victims can continue to smoke, even if they may then be able to demand open heart surgery; the women's prison allows pregnant prisoners to smoke, though a single premature infant can cost well over \$100,000 in the first weeks of life. Given the present \$26 million budget for prison medical care, even a small percentage reduction in illness could save millions.

I have discussed the issue with Mr. Hall, head of the Oregon Department of Corrections, along with Mr.

Maas and Mr. Zenon, the superintendents of the prisons where I presently work. They agree that many county jails in Oregon have gone to no-smoking status without difficulty; Mr. Hall took his previous facility to no-smoking status. However, they do not want to make any immediate changes at the prisons where smoking is now the greatest problem. I feel that when smoking by prisoners is prohibited, there will be an additional incentive to avoid incarceration for those eligible for parole, and decreased medical expenses for the aging population who are not candidates for parole.

Help me question every electoral candidate about their position in this matter?

--Robert Ingle, MD, MPH

Civil Rights Journal Jobs, Welfare And America

something wrong with the job market as we have come to know it in America. Manufacturing and low skill jobs have all but disappeared as skilled, technological jobs have increased. Welfare mothers, many of whom are high school drop-outs, will need extensive job training to qualify for such jobs. The service sector jobs and low-paying fast food jobs which welfare mothers might qualify for rarely include health care and retirement benefits.

Every American should be guaranteed the right to a real, productive job which pays enough to support this or her family. Indeed, the reality is that unless this country creates a massive number of good-paying jobs and comprehensive employment training which provides marketable skills, tinkering with the welfare system will respond to the political rhetoric, but will only cause extreme hardships for families already poor and further alienation of that growing sector of our population conveniently labeled the "underclass." The reality also is that unless we pass universal health care bill and guarantee mothers on welfare day-care for their children, there can be no welfare reform.

In recent weeks the Clinton Administration has put forth a welfare reform proposal which includes some job training and does include child

care provisions. It includes increased child support enforcement efforts which require parents to help support their children. It includes the Earned Income Tax Credit, already passed by Congress, which already has helped poor families cope by subsidizing low-paying jobs. But it also limits women to a lifetime maximum of 24 months cash assistance. Even disabled mothers or mothers with disabled children must develop "employability plans" that eventually lead to work.

A recent Time magazine poll showed that 74 percent of Americans agree that we should replace welfare with a system of guaranteed public jobs. The Administration proposal does this. After two years of receiving AFDC, mothers would be required to work in public service jobs. But they would not be guaranteed the same employee rights, compensation or benefits as regular government workers. Indeed, if we think about the fact that most Americans also do not want to see the size of government increased, and many believe that government is inept and unresponsive to citizens, the question must be asked why would we want to put welfare mothers into dead-end jobs with little or no future.

And what will happen to the welfare reform act if universal health

care is not passed by Congress? It is important to know that many families on welfare ended up there because of health-related reasons and many women are trapped on welfare because the current welfare system offers them Medicaid coverage, while most of the part-time or temporary jobs they can qualify for do not include health care benefits.

And if we're going to talk about ending government subsidies for not working, let's be fair. Let's also talk about ending farm subsidies which the government pays to farmers not to work.

Part of the debate on Capital Hill about welfare is about the number of single mothers in America and it's about choice. It's about how Americans, including teenaged Americans, make choices to have families. But with all the talk about welfare reform, too little of it has included real dialogue with mothers and children on welfare. Too little has included focusing on the success stories -- those women who got off and finding out what they had or what they did to enable them to escape.

The welfare system needs to be changed. But let's not expect families on welfare to walk that tightrope with absolutely no safety net. If they fall, it will reflect on each one of us.

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT Clinton Conference On Africa Ignored CBC

President Bill Clinton appears to go out of his way to disrespect the African American community.

After a year and a half of ignoring Africa -- from the brutal dictatorship in Zaire to the genocide in Rwanda -- the Clinton Administration hastily called a two-day conference on Africa on June 26-27, without consulting at all with the Congressional Black Caucus.

"I don't think there has been a focus on Africa ever in any Administration, including this one," Congressman Donald Payne of New Jersey, a member of the Africa Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the chief foreign policy spokesperson for the Congressional Black Caucus, told the New York Times. "I have no idea what the focus of the conference is or what its intended goals are."

Since he as not invited to participate in the conceptualization and planning of the conference, Congressman Payne, like most members of the Congressional Black Caucus, did not attend. The Clinton administration apparently doesn't think that the views of people of African descent in this country need be taken into account in shaping U.S. policy toward Africa.

One clear example is the administration's policy toward Zaire. There is growing support within the African American community for the democracy movement led by Etienne Tshisekedi. The Clinton administration, on the other hand, has been, in effect, doing what it can behind the scenes to support the 27-year-old CIA-installed dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko, which has left the country brutalized and in a state of economic and social collapse.

On June 16, the State Department released a statement "taking note" of June 14 "election" of a new prime minister, Kengo wa Dondo, by Zaire's High Council of the Republic. The statement refers to Kengo as coming "from the opposition," and expresses the hope that his election will lead to a "credible government of national unity," thereby implying that the administration consid-

ers his election legitimate.

The statement is misleading on two counts. First, Kengo is not "from the opposition." He was Mobutu's prime minister in the days before the Sovereign Conference -- the current government, which is attempting, despite Mobutu's ongoing sabotage, to lead the nation's transition to democracy -- was created. Kengo has emerged as a favorite of the Clinton administration and international financial institutions, but the Zairian people haven't forgotten him as the ruthless persecutor of the political opposition under the Mobutu dictatorship. Moreover, Kengo was cited by the Sovereign Conference as having used his public office to divert state property into his own pocket.

Secondly, the June 14 election in the High Council of the Republic was illegal because it violated the Transitional Constitution, the "Protocol d'Accord" and other documents governing the transition to democracy which were recently signed by Mobutu and the democratic opposition forces in the presence of the United States and its allies. Article 78 of the Transitional Constitution requires that the prime minister be designated by the opposition. The opposition met in accordance with the law and elected the democracy leader Tshisekedi as prime minister with 89% of the vote. Mobutu has refused to honor his agreements, and through his stacking of the High Council, orchestrated the June 14 "election" in which Kengo, his crony, was chosen.

The Clinton administration cannot hope to avert political anarchy in Zaire -- or the rest of Africa -- if it continues to ignore the democratic will of the people of Africa and the pro-democracy views of the African American people and our representatives in Congress. We must urge the Clinton administration to stop playing politics with African lives. We must urge him to withhold recognition from the Kengo government, and to affirm his administration's commitment to assisting Zaire in its efforts to establish democracy and the rule of law.

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