

# EDITORIAL

## Letter To The Editor

I was thrilled to see that Taeyona Jackson, a young Black student and Jefferson Dancer, was acquitted June 22 in Juvenile Justice Court of assault and trespassing. These charges were trumped up by Meier and Frank because she objected to racist treatment and an attack by two security guards.

This is a significant victory and sets an important precedent. Hundreds of Oregonians signed a petition demanding that the charges be dropped against Ms. Jackson and two other young women and that Meier and Frank stop its policy of racial harassment.

Black customers, especially young women, are targeted by poorly-trained security guards and roughed up, publicly humiliated, and false charges are filed against them in retaliation when the women stand up for their rights and expect to be treated with dignity and respect.

The two guards who attacked Ms. Jackson, who is barely 100 pounds, are white and over 200 pounds each. They threw her to the ground, twisted her arms behind her, put a knee in her back; they rubbed her face into the rough floor carpet causing a facial burn, handcuffed her to a pole in a holding room, and refused to call her mother despite repeated requests. Store guards seem to specialize in terrorizing teenaged women of color.

The D.A.'s office and the police department have unquestioningly accepted numerous ludicrous charges against young women of color and are using public funds to drag these women into the Juvenile Justice system.

Taeyona Jackson's victory points the way to make public officials and Meier and Frank accountable to us.

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

## NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### GATT And The WTO Global NAFTA

**The politicians and media have the country in a frenzy over health care, crime and welfare reform legislation.**

While public attention is focused on these worthwhile issues, the Clinton administration is quietly rushing through legislation that may have an even greater impact on the country in the long run -- i.e., GATT. At least there was a big public debate over NAFTA. There is no similar discussion over GATT, even though its impact and implications will be larger. Whether one agrees or disagrees with GATT, everyone ought to support a delay in rushing the legislation into law prior to an extensive public debate.

If you liked NAFTA, you'll love GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade. GATT represents the corporatization of the world economy. If NAFTA represented the rationalization, increased centralization and concentration of capital in the Americas and Canada, GATT represents the same pattern on a worldwide basis.

In September 1986, economic negotiators representing 105 countries met at a resort in Punta Del Este, Uruguay. Negotiations since that time are known as the Uruguay Round. The agreed upon objectives of its participants were the liberalization of trade involving all goods and services and the strengthening of GATT's authority in dealing with disputes among member nations, as well as overseeing their trade policies.

The existing GATT contract of 1947, signed by President Truman,

was a contractual agreement among members on a voluntary basis. GATT was not a binding agreement and the U.S. did not have to conform to restrictions and guidelines instituted under GATT.

On April 15, 1994, in Marrakesh, Morocco, Mickey Kantor, U.S. Trade Representative, and the now 124 member nations, signed what is known as "The Final Act Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations," hereinafter referred to as the World Trade Organization or WTO. The committees formed at the outset of the negotiations were to negotiate an agreement on textiles/apparel, agriculture, intellectual property, services, subsidies, dumping and countervailing measures, tariffs, and strengthening GATT rules.

The primary goals of the U.S. negotiators, it seems, were to open up trade services. They negotiated a system to protect intellectual property rights, as well as open up markets in other countries, particularly in the third world; the significant objective was to open up investment in these countries primarily for the sole interest of U.S. insurance companies and banks.

The primary negotiating tools were in two major areas -- textiles/apparel and agriculture. In order to meet the fast track deadline of December 15, 1993, the U.S. trade negotiators gave up the farm. The most serious errors committed during the Round were the obvious failure to address workers rights and labor standards. The Round could have contained many provisions that would allow for free trade without subjugating workers' rights and labor stan-

dards.

The GATT-established new global commerce agency (WTO) will have increased power, closed procedures and a mandate to assure the supremacy of trade imperatives over health, safety and other living standards. The WTO would operate under a no-veto, one-nation, one-vote procedure.

The WTO will greatly expand the trade rules to impose new restraints on many non-tariff policies, such as consumer, environmental and workplace conditions, which traditionally have been controlled domestically; and it will significantly strengthen secretive dispute resolution mechanisms, guaranteeing stricter enforcement of the global trade disciplines over domestic laws and policies in every country, including the U.S.

The WTO will also undermine citizen control and kill the ability of domestic state and federal democratic bodies to make future improvements for a vast array of domestic policies, from food safety, to federal and state procurement, to communications and public investment policies.

The bill to implement GATT-WTO, H.R. 4206, has been introduced by Rep. Norman Mineta (D-15-CA). The bill is 60 pages long and is limited to the implementations of GATT-WTO provisions concerning antidumping, intellectual property rights, and unfair business practices. It has been referred to four (4) House committees and two (2) Senate committees where a companion bill is expected.

## perspectives

### The Geography Of Nowhere: Locating Minority Business

I note that last week's references to that ubiquitous "Union Avenue" of yesterday sparked a bit of interest in the past and the possible future of this "business street." Not just amazement that I was able, that early on, to pioneer some racially-interactive business enterprises (accounting, finance company), but that it was indicated other African Americans could have/should have followed suit.

Now, in the following assessment of the commercial values/possibilities of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. (MLK), keep in mind that for my



part, there is a gap or discontinuity in my appraisal. I left Portland for Los Angeles in 1954, when my used car dealer accounting clients began to desert MLK for 82nd Avenue, Milwaukie and Beaverton. When I returned to Oregon in 1963, I found that urban renewal and the "Great Society" had forever changed the landscape.

Without going into too much detail, I shall site two of the most important factors that impacted the black economic scene; not all occurring at once, but in a sequence which seriously impaired business development to this day. Not only did the "planners" initially use their almost unlimited resources to wipe out acres of the African American business district and adjoining residential areas (the coliseum and freeway) - but subsequently installed that fateful "median strip" down the length of MLK. Many blacks say that only the ill-fated Emanuel Hospital expansion/development project came near to destroying as much taxable real estate. All of this property, of course, was taken off the tax rolls (location, location, location).

It is that "MLK median strip"

which outrages most Northeast residents, and not just because of the "inconvenience." Many blacks and whites in the area now perceive the "black barrier" for just what it was designed to be; a "ghetto control" installation - like the recently installed street cut-off controlling Northeast 14th between Alberta and Sumner streets.

It did not take long for others in the audience to take up the refrain: "I

can see a direct tie to the situation with our youth," said one woman. A school teacher she went on, "a community is organic and inter-part, there is a gap or discontinuity in my appraisal. I left Portland for Los Angeles in 1954, when my used car dealer accounting clients began to desert MLK for 82nd Avenue, Milwaukie and Beaverton. When I returned to Oregon in 1963, I found that urban renewal and the "Great Society" had forever changed the landscape.

So we have it that the development of "minority business" (or any other kind) depends upon a good understanding of the political and social dynamics of the greater metropolitan area. That "median strip" on MLK will come out - when the "big boys" downtown and 'back east' want it to come out; when they are ready for the high rise and truckline and warehouse/wholesaler distributorships they planned in the sixties.

The 'meat and potatoes' are not reserved for inner city residents, but for those financially able to hold their equity and pay their taxes. Like coliseum-area properties for which black's got peanuts and are now worth hundreds of millions, strategic sites on MLK, Williams Avenue, Vancouver, Alberta and Killingsworth will go through the same phases. (To be continued.)

## Letter To The Editor: The US Invasion Of Haiti Is A Bad Idea

BY RICHARD E. SINCERE, JR.

**Despite humanitarian impulses that tug at American heartstrings, we must avoid the impending U.S. military invasion of Haiti. It is a bad idea that repeats the mistakes of the past and sets a negative precedent for the future.**

The United States has a history of intervening in the affairs of neighboring states, and this history does not (despite some modest successes) reflect well on the American people

or their government. Over the years the targets of U.S. intervention have included Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Panama and Haiti itself. The last time U.S. troops invaded Haiti in 1919, our occupation lasted 25 years. This hardly recommends another such military adventure.

The basic problem with military intervention in Haiti in 1994 is that, although the people of Haiti are suffering under a repressive regime (as they have since their war of independence in the 18th century), there is no clear threat to the U.S. national

interest that motivates action. The Haitian military junta is not revolutionary, making noises about spreading revolt across the Caribbean. It has not invited enemies of America to establish military, naval, or air bases on its territory. It is not engaged in terrorist acts against U.S. citizens or businesses or diplomats.

Without a clearly defined national interest to compel military action, U.S. intervention is doomed to fail. As Barbara Conry, a foreign policy analyst at the Cato Institute, recently noted, in the vast majority of cases, military intervention in re-

gional conflicts does not work. "In fact, it usually aggravates the situation... It rarely achieves its purpose and often has the perverse effect of obstructing, rather than advancing, what it seeks to achieve. (American peacekeepers in Lebanon in 1983, for example, were an aggravating rather than a stabilizing force.) Intervention usually harms American interests as well. The most compelling arguments against American intervention are its ineffectiveness and harm it causes all parties involved."

President Bush argued in favor of intervention in the Persian Gulf

and elsewhere by saying we needed to prevent global instability. Indirectly, perhaps, Haiti's unpopular and undemocratic government might threaten global stability. Yet instability is inherent in an international system made up of more than 150 sovereign states with differing interests, some benign, some malignant. For the United States to intervene everywhere to maintain global equilibrium would create a strain on our resources and would be futile at the same time. Such a policy stance reminds us of the Greek myth of Sisyphus, whose punishment by the

gods forced him to push a heavy boulder up a hill all day long, only to have it roll back down to the bottom each night, starting the whole process over again the next morning.

During the Cold War, America was viewed as the world's policeman. Today, America has been transformed into the world's nanny. Neither role befits a country whose achievements in science, economics, culture, and politics are unmatched and praiseworthy.

So, to President Clinton and his advisors: Think twice, and then again, before sacrificing the lives of young Americans for the vague cause of "regional stability" or for futile "humanitarian assistance."

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

## Civil Rights Journal: And Justice For All...

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

**In the past month or so as I have been speaking to various groups and churches, I have felt compelled to talk about speaking truth in love.**

Because the reality is that too seldom do black and white Americans speak truth to each other. Too often we have shied away from sharing each other's pain and joy. And while African Americans know the world of white America, very few white Americans know the world of African Americans.

The result of our failure to be truthful with each other has been that often it is as if we are speaking two different dialects of the same language in the best of times and two distinctly different, unrelated languages in the worst of times. We have, too often, based our common life in America, on lies or half-truths.

Take, for instance, criminal justice issues. In the eight months since I have been Executive Director of the Commission for Racial Justice, 15-20 percent of my letters have been about the criminal justice system. They come from prisoners themselves, sometimes admitting their guilt, but still pointing to the inequities of sentencing or the racism they feel in the treatment they receive by guards and prison authorities. They tell of how the Klan is active in one

prison in Florida. They tell of how they have received unequal treatment in New York, in Illinois, in states all across this country.

The most difficult letters and calls come from mothers with sons on death row. I have written about one such case, the Chain of Rocks Bridge case in St. Louis, where four young African American men sit on death row after a trial which included questionable testimony and evidence which mysteriously had disappeared. But there are dozens of other stories. Indeed, African Americans still are disproportionately on death row. That's why the Congressional Black Caucus held up its support of the President's Crime Bill for inclusion of a Racial Justice provision which would be used as long as people of color remain disproportionately represented on this nation's death rows.

Time magazine recently wrote, "The perception among blacks that the criminal justice system discriminates against them is pervasive and deep." It pointed to the fact that justice in America still seems swifter when the murder victim is white. Sixty-three African Americans have been executed for murdering whites. While one white has been executed for murdering a black in the past 17 years.

Interestingly, while many African Americans probably would agree with that Time magazine statement,

Time received letters from whites who strongly disagreed. It was one more indication of the gulf between what black America perceives is reality and what white America perceives.

The letters I receive don't just come from prisoners or their family members, either. They come from ordinary citizens, like the woman in southern Illinois who wrote that in her entire lifetime her town never has had an African American on a jury. Or like the person in Georgia whose routine speeding ticket is becoming a real struggle for justice. Or the case in Virginia where an ill African American man was taken off a bus, and even after his relative informed the bus driver and the sheriff that he was ill and not intoxicated, the man was forced to leave the bus and the relative forced to stay on. The man was then left by the sheriff at a local truck stop, known to be a KKK stronghold, rather than taken to a hospital. That man has not been seen since.

These are just a few of the stories I have heard. The fact is that if there is a perception that the laws of our land, and the system which enforces them does not treat all citizens equally, then the perceived injustice is a reality.

It was the judicial system which ruled that blacks were only two-thirds human, through the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision. Not

since the days of lynching in the South, when black men were routinely hung from trees for supposedly looking at a white woman or for not stepping off the curb when a white person passed them on the street, have African Americans felt that they could receive equal treatment by the judicial system of our country.

Even as the African leaders and groups who fought for integration of schools and public accommodations in the 1940's, 50's and 60's turned to the judicial system for these changes, they were experiencing the water hoses and dogs of the local sheriffs all across the South. The scales of justice have not always been balanced when it comes to people of color.

For many African Americans, of all education and income levels, the moment of truth was the Rodney King verdict. For all of America, both white and those of color, had watched over and over the tapes of Rodney King being beaten nearly to death. And, for the most part, white America accepted the explanation of the jurors who said that Rodney King was in control of what was happening that night. For most people of color it was proof that even when white America could see with its own eyes, it denies what it sees and that there is not justice for all.

America, we've got to talk about the differences in our experiences.

We've got to somehow, some way, speak the truth. We've got to ensure justice for all. For without justice, there will be no peace.

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