

# EDITORIAL

The world celebrated what would have been Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 66th birthday on Jan. 15. Following the Nov. 8 elections, there is an attempt by some in both parties to turn back the clock on King's dream of equal protection under the law for all.

One rhetorical "hook" they are using is called "unfunded mandates." What are unfunded mandates? It is an umbrella term for federal statutes and regulations that impose requirements on state and local governments without providing funding for meeting those requirements. Many important civil rights laws are considered unfunded mandates such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights

## NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### Using GOP "Contract" To Kill King's Dream

Act and the Religious Free Restoration Act. In addition, many laws that protect the rights of workers, such as family leave and minimum wage laws, would be considered unfunded mandates because they impose costs on the states in their capacity as employers without providing funding to meet those costs.

We recognize that state and local governments are facing increasing fiscal constraints, but we do not believe that eliminating government's historic role of protecting the rights of all citizens is a solution. The Senate is debating a bill, that would create a procedural roadblock to the passage of future laws

and regulations containing "unfunded mandates," but would not prohibit such laws. The bill does not apply to "constitutionally based rights," and laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, religion, national origin and handicapped or disability status.

While this exemption protects some civil rights laws from the harsh effects of the bill, it does not cover important programs that support and empower Americans. Even with the civil rights exemption, the federal laws that require state and local governments to take steps to try to change the legacy of discrimination through housing and educational standards, standards that require governments to invest in our youth and our poor, would not be exempt.

## VANTAGE POINT

### A Resolution To Rekindle The Black Freedom Struggle

BY RON DANIELS

As the new year dawns, Africans in America Should be imminently aware that we are just five years away from the dawning of a new century and a new millennium.

The plight of our people in this country and the world is perilous. As W.E.B. DuBois correctly prophesized, the problem of the twentieth century has indeed been the color line. The domination of Africans in America and the Pan-African world on the basis of racial oppression and economic exploitation has been a devastating fact of life throughout this century. Nonetheless African people have made some progress. As the old folks would put it, "we sure ain't what we want to be. We sure ain't what we gonna be. But we sure ain't what we were." The crises

which afflict the masses of African people, however, continue to be horrendous. Thus, if we are serious about being what "we're gonna be," then it is imperative that we rekindle the Black Freedom struggle.

Yes, we need to rekindle the Black Freedom Struggle. Despite the "gains" that Africans in America and the world have made we are still not free. African people, particularly the African masses, are not free from individual and institutional racism. The masses of African people are not free from chronic unemployment, underemployment, poverty, poor health, inadequate housing, inferior education, and toxic environments. Even those among us who have benefitted handsomely from the civil rights movement and the Black Power movement are still looked upon as niggers in America, an unpleasant inconvenience to be tolerated at best. Middle class or upper class standing

should not blind any of us to the reality that until all African people are free, no African person is immune to the indignities of racism, racial oppression and economic exploitation.

As African people we need to collectively resolve that the twenty-first century will be the century of African redemption. For that resolution to be meaningful, however, each and every African person who is concerned about the present plight and future status of the race must make an individual resolution/commitment to contribute to the Black Freedom Struggle. Each African person must recognize that the liberation of African people is in their hands and act accordingly.

One of the greatest impediments to achieving liberation is the apathy, indifference and lack of involvement of Black people in the process of breaking the shackles that bind

us. Far too many Black people do not take the time or make the time to participate in the organizations, agencies and movements that are engaged in the struggle for social justice and social change. The Black Freedom Struggle not only requires time, there is always a need for money. You cannot run an organization or agency or build and sustain a movement without money. If we rely on people and forces external to the Black community to finance the Black Freedom Struggle, then they will control the direction of our movement.

It is indeed time for some serious new year's resolutions. This year you need to resolve that in the interest of rekindling the Black Freedom Struggle you will take the time to participate in and support at least one organization that is fighting for the uplift and betterment of Black people.

## perspectives

### Blacks Reported On Way Out In Los Angeles; Could It Happen Here? Part II

By Prof. McKinley Burt

I'm sorry if I was not as clear as I could have been in that first paragraph last week. I simply wished to draw attention to the fact that the oft-used metaphor, "to rise from the ashes like the Phoenix," came into the world's languages through the folklore of ancient East African people - they first thought that the resplendent "firebird" (flamingo) had actually perished in volcanic fires nearby, but, miraculously, had been created anew when thousands of birds rose from desolate areas.

My intended allegory was that certain other of God's beautiful creatures might also rise like the "Phoenix" from the economic devastation of so many of our inner cities. Given the African American's time-tested ability to survive "the slings and arrows of outrageous fate," the idea may not seem too fanciful. But, on the other hand, a faith buttressed by some hard (and favorable) facts is found more desirable by those of us of fainter heart; especially those like the reader who reminded me of my September series, "Urban Planning: Africans Did It With Style and Grace."

Whether we are "created anew" or "rise from the urban ashes" or not can be more than just the choice of a proper metaphor. The pertinent question is when will we as a people begin to incorporate our experiences and our well-documented skills into a meaningful revolution of our archaic mindset? Over the years our continuous inspection of Jet, Ebony, the black print media in general and television, provides a parade of what we are told are our leaders, movers and shakers, the creme de la creme - and the role models of conspicuous consumption whose full-page displays are sponsored by the distilleries.

When we look for stories on real economic achievements,

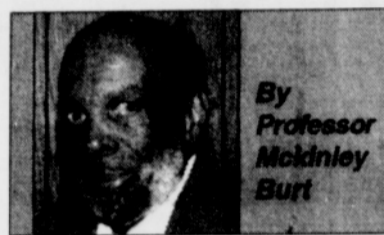
exercises in ownership, capital accretion, new manufacturing enterprises or urban real estate developments on a par with what blacks accomplished at the turn-of-the-century or in the 1920s, they are so few as to be considered non-existent. We do not find a recognition and further development of the economic component of "Dr. King's Dream." What we seem to have, instead, is a continuous, nationwide spectacle which could best be described as a "permanent Ebony fashion show." This from the people who built the Pyramids and developed words and numbers.

Now, that question, "could it happen here? (does it happen here?)"

So many of "us" are wagging and clucking our tongues over a certain article that appeared in the Portland Oregonian about a month ago. A black teenager described her visit and impressions of the Atlanta area, anticipating her later enrollment in a black college; I paraphrase here: "Oh, it was so wonderful and eye-opening. I never saw so many Mercedes and Cadillacs on a college campus - so many well-dressed black people in their furs and so much top level entertainment and social events. We're sure getting over."

You may be fairly correct in your estimation of how much this may have cost the Negro College Fund in contributions. I listened to comments of some of my fellow members in the Association of Oregon Industries, and you wouldn't like them. One in particular went right to the cutting edge, "Why don't they go to Oregon schools, it may be cheaper in the long run and besides, they would learn about the economics and opportunities of their home state - and to compete with other cultures?" Another called them "cultural refugees."

So will it, can it happen here as we send our so-called "best and brightest" to other lands, few to return? More next week.



By Professor McKinley Burt

## Civil Rights Journal

### America's Concentration Camps

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

I remember when I was a teenager in the 1960s and there was much turmoil in our cities. The whispered rumors were that the government had concentration camps set up around the country and that if the riots continued, black Americans would be rounded up and put in them. What I now know is that those rumors probably were based on the realities of the not-so-distant past and what happened to Japanese Americans during World War II.

I was recently in Los Angeles, where the Japanese American National Museum has opened a year-long exhibit on America's concentration camps. The U.S. government forcibly placed in these camps 120,313 people, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. These Japanese Americans were incarcerated under armed guard, but they were never accused of any crimes and they were never any trials or any convictions.

They were simply Japanese or of Japanese ancestry during a time when Japan was at war with the U.S.

This powerful exhibit is done through the eyes of those sent to the camps, some of whom were incarcerated for three and a-half years. Many of the camps had only the very basics of life, including communal bathrooms and block mess halls. There were 10 War Relocation Authority (WRA) concentration camps and 12 Justice Department internment camps located from California to Arkansas. In most of the Justice Department camps only men were incarcerated, splitting up families. Some of these men were picked up within hours of the Pearl Harbor attack and most were business and religious leaders with little or no political involvement. In other cases, entire families were moved, including small children. Most were located in remote, unpopulated areas; many were in deserts or other inhospitable climates.

If the person who remarked that to not know your history is to repeat the mistakes of the past is correct, there are several reasons it is impor-

tant for us all to be aware of this shameful part of American history.

First of all, we are a country whose Constitution is at the heart of who we are. But the lesson of the Japanese American concentration camps is that all Americans must be vigilant protectors of our constitutional rights if we are to remain a strong democracy. In this case, all three branches of the U.S. government ignored the Bill of Rights and imprisoned innocent people, without the benefit of a trial. Later President Harry Truman and Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark lamented our country's actions.

Secondly, in this case, the government used or misused its power to keep the real truth from the people. Language, for instance, was carefully chosen, with the terms "relocation" or "evacuation" camps being used instead of concentration camps and "non-alien" instead of citizens. This allowed the government to maintain a positive public image and sidetracked legal and constitutional challenges.

Thirdly, in this case, the government caused extreme hardship on its citizens and legal residents. Many

families lost businesses and homes since they were given no time to sell or lease them. Many families were separated and forced to live in nearly unbearable circumstances. Many of those who were incarcerated never were able to overcome the shame and hardship of it all.

But the good news is that the U.S. government did finally accept responsibility for its actions. In 1981 the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians held a series of hearings across the country. Some 750 witnesses testified and in 1988 President Reagan signed into law a bill in which the U.S. government regretted its actions and provided for individual payments of \$20,000 to surviving internees and set up an education fund.

If you're in Los Angeles, visit the Japanese American National Museum and see for yourself these powerful stories of the people in America's concentration camps. They are stories of patriotism, loyalty, personal strength and family values. This is a story every American should know.

## Liberalism Is Dead

BY ERIC H. KEARNEY

It was in critical condition prior to Election 1994, but after this November liberalism has seen its lifeline go flat. The tombstone has been prepared.

The legacy of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and President Lyndon Johnson will soon be erased. Welfare and social programs which were years in development and contribute to many lives will end.

The role of government will be dramatically redefined in the next two years with a Republican Congress and a Democrat as President. President Bill Clinton was elected as a "New Democrat" and as an "agent of change." What those two terms

mean in the current political environment is difficult to determine.

President Clinton has been placed in a precarious position. The Democratic party is more liberal than the American voting public as shown by the most recent election results. He, however, must cater to the powerful liberal faction in the party.

During the first two years of his term he has managed to placate liberals. He has signed executive orders for those in the party concerned about pro-choice. He ushered through the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act. Through the Crime Bill he obtained a ban on assault weapons.

Despite these successes for liberals, president Clinton has had to balance their interest with conserva-

tive positions. For instance, many liberal groups opposed his support of NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. He also failed to support Lani Guinier for head of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department. Instead of Ms. Guinier, President Clinton appointed a former co-worker of Ms. Guinier, Deval Patrick.

With the large swing towards the Republicans, President Clinton has no hope of passing the centerpiece of his administration health care. President Clinton will have to readjust his goals and work toward a more conservative agenda.

One of the first issues which the Republicans will attack is welfare reform. This is a classic conservative issue. President Clinton will have to

compromise more than he probably wants.

Liberalism lacks the advocates that it once had. Besides the Congress becoming more conservative, the Supreme Court is still conservative. Furthermore, there is no clear leader for liberalism. Senator Ted Kennedy has been effectively silenced by his close win and his past peccadilloes. Senator Paul Simon has decided that this is his last term. New York Governor Mario Cuomo lost.

Liberalism lacks leaders and focus. Its influence on American politics with the most recent election has ended.

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