

EDITORIAL

If you are tired of Republican hypocrisy about the federal budget deficit and debt--i.e., those primarily responsible for deliberately creating deficits acting like they're actually concerned about them; and if you're tired of Democratic hypocrisy--i.e., alleging to protect surplus Social Security fund when they have already been spending them on the budget deficit; then maybe you're ready to read this week's JaxFax.

David Stockman, Ronald Reagan's Director of the Office of Management and Budget, revealed, first in *The Atlantic Monthly* and later in his book, that the Republican strategy in 1981 was to deliberately create huge budget deficits and dramatically drive up the national debt as a way of forcing cutbacks in domestic spending.

For Perspective: For over 200 years, from George Washington through Jimmy Carter, the accumulated national debt was \$908 billion. After just 12 years of Reagan/Bush economic policies--i.e., huge tax breaks for the rich (originally \$750 billion)--the debt actually quadrupled to nearly \$4 trillion. One expert has estimated that tax cuts enacted since the late 1970s for the richest

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Balancing The Budget

1% of families cost the federal treasury \$164 billion in 1992--i.e., \$84 billion in decreased revenues and \$81 billion in interest on the accumulated debt.

The Reagan/Bush fiscal policies which, on the one hand allowed the rich to pay less than their fair share of taxes, on the other hand forced the government to borrow from them to finance the debt--a double bonanza for the rich.

The deficit must be put in perspective. Deficit fixation and attempts to cut the deficit too deeply and too quickly can paralyze efforts to bring about much needed domestic change, drag the economy down, increase unemployment and actually increase the deficit itself.

Borrowing per se is not necessarily bad. Borrowing to buy a house

or to fund one's education is different than borrowing to pay off gambling debts or to buy drugs and alcohol. There is an important difference between consumption expenditure and investment expenditures. Additionally, if one takes out a mortgage on a house, then gets a promotion and a significant salary increase on their job, the mortgage payment actually becomes less burdensome. Therefore, the size of the deficit, in and of itself, is not a drag on the economy. When business does not expand it is because of lack of demand, not the budget deficit. Thus, if the economy were to become a high growth, high wage, full employment economy, the burden of the deficit would actually decline.

Another argument for deficit reduction is that the deficit pushes up

interest rates. During the 1980s, when the deficit shot up, interest rates remained essentially the same. There is a much stronger link between Federal Reserve policies and rising interest rates.

Perspective also means seeing the deficit in relation to the size of the economy. The sum may be large in 1995, but in 1945, due to the unprecedented size of wartime expenditures, the federal deficit was more than 22% of GDP, compared to roughly 5% in 1993.

Obsession with the budget deficit created even more tragic deficits. Our deficits are also in our rundown infrastructure of roads, bridges, airports, waste disposal facilities and lack of environmental protection. They are in our failure to combat crime and drugs and in a significant part of a generation growing up semi-literate, in an unending cycle of poverty.

Our deficits are in an educational system increasingly falling beyond other systems in the world, and in the gaps of child care, health care and the inadequate housing of tens of million of Americans.

Finally, when Sen. Bob Dole (R-KS) brings up the Balanced Budget Amendment again in the middle of the 1996 campaign, thanks to JaxFax Rainbow readers will be armed.

Balanced Budget Amendment Needed Defeat

BY ROBERT N. TAYLOR

In a historic vote, the U.S. Senate recently failed by just one vote to pass the cornerstone of the Republican Party's so-called "Contract with America," - the Balanced Budget Amendment. It is good that the amendment failed.

While the federal government should live within its means without taxing away the incomes of the American people, the balanced budget amendment was a bad idea. First of all, we take the position that if you truly want to balance the federal budget, then balance the federal budget. Do not pass a constitutional amendment (which could take up to two years to be approved by the necessary 38 states), simply get to work

balancing the budget. The Republican attempt to get the amendment seems hypocritical. During the 12 years of the Republican presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, neither ever submitted a balanced budget. The reason was that it is a whole lot easier to talk about it than to actually do it.

Secondly, the balanced budget amendment would have given too much power to the courts. Instead of budgetary decisions being made in Congress, they would increasingly be made in the courtroom. Such a prospect would lead to America being a less democratic country because a handful of judges would end up refereeing disputes.

Third, with the new Republican majority in both the House and the Senate, the likelihood is that the bud-

get would be "balanced" on the backs of the poor and lower working classes. Witness, the amount of time the Republicans have been spending on various schemes to reduce or eliminate welfare. Most people are not aware of the fact that the two major welfare programs (AFDC and Food Stamps) only account for approximately 2 percent of the federal budget. The Republicans focus on welfare because it is easy. The poor and lower working classes do not have lobbyists in Washington and they do not vote at the levels they should.

Finally, it is highly problematic as to whether a truly balanced budget is practical in modern society. It is often argued that if most citizens have to live within their budgets, so should the federal government. But the fact is that most citizens do not live within their budgets. Unless you

paid for your car and house in cash and pay off the entire balances on your credit cards each month and never go into debt, you are not living within your budget. To a considerable degree the American society runs on debt.

Now, please understand that we believe federal government spending needs to be curtailed. The government is taking too much from its citizens in taxes. But the very people who now want to pass a balanced budget amendment are the people who passed the laws and programs which threw the budget out of balance in the first place. If you want to stop the government from spending more than it takes in then stop passing all those laws and funding all those programs. Congress already has the power to balance the budget. Just do it.

Civil Rights Journal: Affirming Affirmative Action

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

President Clinton says it has the potential to splinter the country in next year's elections.

He was referring to affirmative action. He was referring to his concern about the alienation of white working class voters. What he may not realize is that it has the potential to split the country even if there were no election next year. And he also must be concerned about the alienation of people of color as this country lurches toward being a country with no racial/ethnic majority early in the new century.

Affirmative action was designed to be a remedy for past discrimination in the work force, particularly against African Americans and women. In the decades since it was instituted, the African American middle class has grown steadily. Affirmative action has benefitted many in the black middle class, allowing many of

us to enter educational institutions where we would never have studied otherwise and to enter careers which had heretofore been closed to us.

But affirmative action has also benefitted the rest of the country as well. Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa one pointed out how much their nation had lost in human potential because of apartheid and the same could be said of this country as well. Our total society has benefitted by its commitment to seek out intentionally those who had been kept out in the past.

It is important to also remember that African Americans and people of color are not the only direct beneficiaries of affirmative action. Thus, the inclusion of white women in the work force through affirmative action has benefitted white families directly by increasing their earnings and standard of living. Since most white women are married to white men, white men, too, have benefitted from affirmative action.

California is facing a ballot test of its affirmative action policies led, in part, by an African American businessman. Indeed, as the debate on affirmative action grows louder, conservatives are quick to point out that there are African Americans opposed to affirmative action. They point to people like Clarence Thomas, whose entire career is a direct result of affirmative action.

But critics of affirmative action fail to point to the many, many others who favor its policies. People like Dr. Joyce Ladner, interim president of Howard University, who has observed that affirmative action isn't about putting unqualified people into opportunities which they are totally unprepared. People like Hug Price, president of the National Urban League, who warns, "now is not the time for society to waver on the goal of full inclusion in the mainstream." People like California Assembly

Speaker Willie Brown, who has pointed out that even with current state affirmative action policies, blacks and Hispanics still lag behind in faculty tenure positions and admissions, as well as in government business contracts. People like Jesse Jackson, Mary Frances Berry and the Congressional Black Caucus.

Critics of affirmative action argue that we have given preferences to African Americans for long enough. But they neglect to look at the millions of African Americans who are still unemployed, untrained and who have been written off by society as the "permanent underclass." What is the remedy for them?

Our country cries out for responsible leadership around the issue of affirmative action. Our nation needs affirmative action, whether it wants to admit it or not. Our nation needs jobs for its people and the sooner we deal with that, the better we'll all be.

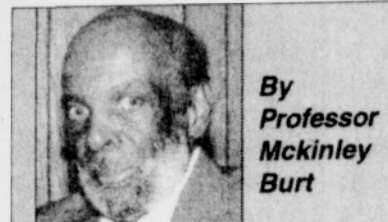
perspectives

The Education Scene, III

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

There was a very good response to last week's education article. Readers agreed with me that a full and "complete" recitation of historical facts is a crucial element of a useful education; so before I continue with contemporary issues in Oregon, and Portland in particular, let me share several of those reader's comments with you.

In respect to my review of Peter Fryer's book, "Staying Power: The History of Black People In Britain", one lady says, "It was a wonderful revelation to my children to learn that there were strong, manly blacks who preferred to fight for their freedom and human dignity rather than for the 'cruel slave masters' as you termed them. This was the true revolution, not that of the land-hungry colonialists in revolt against the constituted authority."



By Professor McKinley Burt

The same woman enclosed a photocopy of an article by the noted black historian, J.A. Rogers (from his "Your History", circa 1930). Rogers cites from a collection of George Washington's letters in the national Archives: A third of the army of General Phillip Schuyler in the Revolutionary "War" were Negroes. Schuyler in a desperate effort to get more volunteers wrote Washington, "Is it consistent with the 'Sons of Freedom' to trust their all to be defended by slaves?" (Point made).

A white reader, an educator, waxed eloquent over my "cogent presentation" of Manuel's book, "Isaac Newton, Historian". I don't know about all that, but we are certainly in agreement that page 5-104 to 106 are perhaps the most critical in the book--maybe in this genre of historical research. We have in the aforementioned pages a brief but accurate description of the so-called "Greek Pantheon of Gods" which actually was African in Origin as Newton points out--as did Plato, Herodotus, Pliny the elder, Diop, George G.M. James, Chuncellor Williams, John G. Jackson, etc.

As Atkinson said in his book, *Magic, Myth And Medicine*, "The Greeks were the greatest of thieves." The Africans deified their human heroes, rulers and men of letters as gods (a process called "euhemer-

ism"). Black Ammon, Hermes, Osiru, Horus, Isis, Uranus, etc. are now portrayed in the Greek family tree as lily white Zeus, Apollo, Saturn, Aphrodite, the lineage correctly on page 105 where he also gives the Africans of ancient Libya credit for major contributions in astronomy, and developing the calendar--while savage Greeks were still dressing in bear skins. This is the land that later became Pronecia, Carthage, etc., and produced Hannibal the great African general who took his elephants over the Alps to defeat the Romans. His tactics are studied today (Second Punic Wars).

Well, so be it; we return to today's trials and tribulations, having left off March 15 with an assessment of Oregon's 1991 School Reform Act. At this writing, Friday, March 24, a bitterly contested revision (House Bill 2991) is headed for the Senate. In the acrimonious House hearings in January, one side insisted that the new law was much too subjective, "concentrating to much on behavior and learning skills at the expense of a good grounding in academic knowledge." Everybody knows where I stand--what do you think about the matter? Write us!

A fearful parent has called me three times in the past week--after reading last week of a new "Alternative School" opening up in Northeast (44 N.E. Morris St.). To open next fall with the blessings of the school district, the "Northeast Community School" is a cooperative enterprise between the district and a nonprofit corporation created by two white Portland teachers. It is to be an experimental Middle School with "integrated, project-oriented lessons--the school will draw heavily on parents and volunteers--especially targets the disadvantaged".

Community concerns are being expressed loudly and clearly: "Is this another 'Adams High School' kind of grant hustle where two 'Boston Hip-pies' were allowed to come here and experiment with our children in a 'do-your-own-thing' disaster?" and we hear, "Is this allegedly independent school really a creature of a school District and Board that have abandoned any intention of really educating inercity children?" More next week, but let us hear from you. Please!

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Science Skills Center Inc.

BY MICHAEL A. JOHNSON

The Science Skills Center was started in 1979 by a group of African-American scientists and educators concerned about the low level of science participation of young people in their community.

The Science Skills Center is a not for profit community based organization headquartered in the prospect Heights section of Brooklyn. The Center's primary objectives are to encourage young minority and female students to pursue science and mathematics careers and to instill a positive attitude toward themselves,



Letter To The Editor

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their families, fellow students and the community so that they will use their understanding of science to make the world a better place for all people.

Over the years, we have been able to accomplish a great deal at the Science Skills Center. Many young people have passed through our doors and have gone on the road to careers in science and mathematics. We were able to accomplish extraordinary achievements, despite the fact that we were underfunded and understaffed while waiting for grant monies to arrive. The loss of a major funding source caused the staff to work for months without compensation.

We continued to work because we felt the mission was a worthy one. We compensated for that loss by utilizing fundraising money to keep staff on board. The cuts in our state and city funding, placed us in the position of repeatedly asking staff to work without remuneration until monies were raised.

We had over 400 students enrolled in the after school program across 4 sites; 3 in Brooklyn and 1 in Queens. Since our budget was cut drastically, we had no choice but to suspend three sites and keep one site, P.S. 9, open due to contract obligations. Presently, we have 100 students

enrolled at this site and the demand for educational afterschool care is increasing.

It is now necessary to ask the parents and community to vote on whether or not our program should continue. We must cover a deficit of over \$100,000 if we are to continue providing quality service for the advancement of our young people.

If you are concerned and able, please send your donation to: Science Skills Center, Inc., 80 Underhill Avenue Brooklyn, N.Y. 11238, if you have any ideas for potential fundraisers, please call 718-636-6215.

Thank you for your kind consideration and continued support.