

EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily Reflect Or Represent The Views Of The Portland Observer Newspaper Or Its Staff

Former history professor and now Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich does not practice what he teaches-history.

Responding to an affirmative action question, The Washington Post reported, "Gingrich dismissed the argument that the beneficiaries of affirmative action, commonly African Americans, have been subjected to discrimination over a period of centuries. 'That is true of virtually every American,' Gingrich said, noting that 'the Irish were discriminated against by the English, for example'."

Despots and other totalitarians like to burn the books--i.e., start history when they come to power, or pervert history for their own narrow political ends. One would expect more from a former history professor, especially one originating in the South.

History is unbroken continuity, with causes and effects, actions and reactions, truth and consequences--but continuous. To try to compare the acculturation problems that other ethnic groups had when they voluntarily came to this country for a better opportunity; with 250 years of involuntary slavery, language, culture,

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Gingrich: Historian That Denies History

families and freedom destroyed, 3/5th human written into the constitution, "no rights that a white man is bound to respect" (Dred Scott), "separate but equal" (Plessy v. Ferguson), and ongoing discrimination, is unbefitting of a history professor.

To equate this history with the history of the Irish, the Polish, the Jews, the Italians or any of the other immigrant groups is beyond caloused and distorted. To erase this history, to deny this reality, is simply to propagate a racist myth and to operate from a racist premise--which is not a long distance from begin and

out-and-out racist. [The only exception to this is Native Americans, a people who experienced genocide on their own continent.] This level of ignorance from the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, who is just two heartbeats away from the presidency, is dangerous.

On "Face The Nation" last week, Bob Schieffer again asked Newt about affirmative action. His response? "Well, I draw a real distinction, Bob, between helping individuals--which I think we should do...But I think anything which is based on a genetic code where there's an auto-

matic set-aside, an automatic quota where we're not dealing with you as an individual, but we're now dealing with you as some kind of class structure, I think is frankly un-American. I think America is a country where we are endowed by our creator as individuals with certain inalienable rights. It's not a question of us being endowed as a block grant, where we have to find out, "Who was your grandmother? Who was your great-grandmother? How do you fill out the forms? And I think that that's a big mistake."

Schieffer: I take it the basis of your preference programs, if that's what you want to call them, would be based on economic need. Gingrich: Yeah, I think any American who's poor, whether they're white, or black, or Hispanic, or American Indian or Asian, if you're poor, we need to help you because we want all Americans to be in the middle class."

Newt says he's a revolutionary. Until this last statement on "Face The Nation," JaxFax had its doubts. But this should prove it to all the world--No Poor People, No Rich People, Only Middle Class People. That should prove that Newt is a genuine revolutionary!

perspectives

Getting Help (Education) II

When I suggested last week that "It's Hard To Get Good Help These Days (In getting Educated)," a broad cross-section of readers agreed.

And several suggested in turn that I expand further on the "attitudes, support level and long-term Commitment" of, "That nebulous entity you term industry." I plan to do just that and in the very near future.

Several other education issues, however, demand our more immediate attention. A few weeks ago I had a very spirited dialogue with a group of parents who were excited over reports in the national media that an African American teenager has netted herself over a quarter-million dollars in college scholarships and grants. As is usually the case under these circumstances, one has to, simultaneously, keep up or enhance the enthusiasm to achieve a similar success--but also prepare gung-ho enthusiasts for a less-than-happy outcome.

In the first place, as subsequent media accounts revealed, the girl was an over-achiever of the first rank: Grades, extra-curricular activities, student offices, community interaction and so forth. Much of the listed diverse and eclectic activity indicated strong abilities and traits involving communication skills--as well as intense parental support.

In emphasizing these facts, what I was really saying to these parents was, "hey! be sure that your little darling and his/her family support structure is up-to-snuff before you start building air castles that can come crashing down and do permanent economic and emotional damage". I put an experience-based spin on the matter as I recited my recruitment and counseling activities while teaching at Portland State University. I tried to get across this should be no Mickey Mouse affair, but a sophisticated and logical approach.

Subsequently, several parents have called me in reference to a April 18, 1995 Oregonian article by Julie Tripp ("Managing Your Money: Comparing College Offers"). They reassured me that my assessments of academic affairs fit in very well with the contemporary evalua-

tions they were collecting. For instance Ms Tripp seems to have paraphrased some of my most cogent advice: When you are comparing several; financial aid packages, don't be dazzled by the total amount of the aid offered. Instead, compare what your family has to pay in each case, and what you have to borrow in each case." There is much more good advice but in the end, all depends upon the students/parent's ability to transmit, retrieve and process information.

For those who feel that "Higher education" is a very necessary building block for structuring a realistic future in the 21st-Century, the activities and pronouncements of both the Oregon State Legislature and Gov. John Kitzhaber have created nothing but a deep concern. As the Governor said, "How ironic, a fiscally conservative Republican legislature putting the next budget out of balance". (Voting to give \$3.55 billion in state aid to kindergarten through the 12th grade schools--\$100 million more than he sought). Of course, the governor is not nearly as upset as those involved in higher education and dependent on it for a meaningful future--they believe that any over-budget legislation and ensuring shortfalls will be at the expense and detriment of Oregon's Colleges and Universities.

You know, looking back to where I first became aware of the "pedagogic wars" as they have been termed, I seem to remember that a few decades ago, rushing out to buy the latest edition of "Lovejoys College Guide" (Circa 1965). I was employed in administration at a large industrial plant, and as I have recited here before, there was much concern over the level of competency of many of the college graduates being hired (and high school graduates). Our department head was determined that he was going to conduct his own little investigation of the "incomprehensible", procuring school catalogs, samples of curriculums, etc.

When I left the firm in 1969 the man was still talking to himself, and had a vacant, bewildered stare; "Don't these people understand that both groups are trying to educate the same youth?"



By Professor Mckinley Burt

"Along The Color Line": The Changing Politics Of Race

BY DR. MANNING MARABLE

Everywhere we turn today, the headlines and the media seem to be preoccupied with the politics of race.

Sometimes the politics of race is obscured in an aespian language, in which the victims and the predators are half-hidden or even inverted; sometimes on late-night talk shows or even racialized films, the politics of race which are addressed through personalities or issues connected with the black community come under vicious attack or parody.

In recent weeks and months, the politics of race has been expressed through a variety of issues and events: for example, affirmative action and

minority set-aside programs are publicly attacked as policies promoting "reverse discrimination"; the televised trial of former football superstar O.J. Simpson continues to fascinate millions of Americans, with its burlesque mixture of interracial sex, double-homicide, spousal abuse, and police misconduct; welfare programs are under new scrutiny, with calls for mandatory work by AFDC recipients, and demands to outlaw support to unwed mothers under the age of eighteen; and new restrictions are being pushed on nonwhite immigrants, from the denial of access to public medical services to the imposition of "English Only" language requirements. "Race" thus continues to be central to American politics, but its definition and meaning are being radically transformed.

One reason for this is the massive migration of millions of Latin American, Caribbean, Asian and African people into the US, as well as in Western Europe, since the 1960s. The influx of these new minorities in Europe has meant the break down of older racial identities and communities. For example, in the United Kingdom by the 1970s, immigrants from the Caribbean, Asian and Africa of radically divergent ethnic backgrounds and languages began to term themselves "black", as a political entity. In the US, the search for both disaggregation and rearticulation of group identity and consciousness among people of color is also occurring, although along different lines due to distinct historical experiences and backgrounds. In the Hawaiian islands, for example,

many of the quarter million native Hawaiians support the movement for political sovereignty and self-determination. But do native Hawaiians have more in common culturally and politically with American Indians or Pacific islanders? What are the parallels and distinctions between the discrimination experienced by Mexican Americans in the US Southwest and African-Americans under slavery and Jim Crow segregation? Do the more than five million Americans of Arab, Kurdish, Turkish and Iranian nationality and descent have a socioeconomic experience in the US which places them in conflict with native-born African-Americans, or is there sufficient common interest and social affinity which provides the potential framework for principled activism?

Affirmative Action: Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil, See No Evil

BY JAMES L. POSEY

Is the white backlash against affirmative action reaches a frenzied pitch, you have only to review American history to understand why so many whites refuse to accept unrefutable evidence that racism and discrimination continue to favor white America at the expense of nearly all other racial groups.

Even when the evidence is obvious that these programs in many cases favor whites more than ethnic minorities, the attacks persist. For some unexplained reason, many whites become oblivious to the facts and reasons when the issue is race-conscious remedies. They simply ignore the data, resist all logic, turn the tables and become artful in blaming the victims.

Let me repeat it: the very programs under attack have been manip-

ulated to ultimately favor whites and refutes the absurd notion of reverse discrimination. Programs ostensibly designed to lift the fortunes of people of color after centuries of discrimination are so thoroughly corrupted that real economic progress for African-Americans is barely perceptible.

Today in Oregon, Blacks and other minorities, especially Hispanics, are just as much responsible for the demise of affirmative action as any angry white man. Additionally, white women are particularly at fault since they receive the lion's share of most contracting work or employment advancements. They all have allowed misuse and abuse in programs to exist and persist unabated. They have all sacrificed the integrity of the program for their own self interests. For example, there is a local Black trucking firm which routinely obtains contracts and as a minority firm and almost exclusively passes on the benefits of the program to white male trucking operators for a small broker's fee.

And, any reasonable observer would be hard pressed to find a white woman, particularly in the area of construction contracting, who reciprocates the benefits of affirmative action programs to other women or minorities either through subcontracts or by providing jobs. Furthermore, project owners and affirmative action officials at all levels require little accountability and subscribe to a general policy of see no evil, speak no evil and hear no evil.

As it was in the reconstruction period just after slavery was abolished, scoundrels, both Black and white, unscrupulously exploited the promise of freedom. From the beginning, one has to question who was thought to deserve fairness, equality and freedom in America. With slavery as a backdrop, one has to wonder how the founding fathers could emersed themselves in so many moral platitudes, such as, "All men are created equal.... endowed with certain inalienable rights.... life, liberty and the pur-

suit of happiness." At the same time, they had to know they were invoking the greatest hypocrisy by preaching democracy while practicing tyranny and committing atrocities.

So it is with the attacks on affirmative action today. How can America deny it's own conscious and sense of humanity in the face of persistent and insistent racial inequities? As national columnist William Raspberry and others have asserted, in this entire debate, there is little focus on the disease that precipitated the need for affirmative action. Another columnist, Clarence Page, tried to put a positive face on the issue by asking readers to examine the realities of the argument. His attempts to reason with white America by making the case that white males are really competing with each other for nearly all jobs is backed up by plenty of research. He easily makes the point, as the data indicates, that there is virtually no threat from minorities and women, particularly at the higher levels.

Letter To The Editor

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

BY CLARICE WHITE:

Recently I spent a day canvassing parts of North Portland to determine how voters feel about the upcoming ballot measure called 26-26.

In spite of lots of publicity on the subject many of my neighbors still do not know that the ballot measure will secure thousands of acres of land to provide open space, streams and parks in the Metropolitan Portland area. This is especially surprising considering the number of parcels that would be saved right in our own backyard.

North Portlanders stand to benefit greatly, as do all of the residents

of our region, by conversion of 27 acres of Willamette River frontage in what we call "Willamette Cove" to open space for bicyclists and hikers. With minor cleanup of the area and care for existing habitat and wildlife on the site, we can convert what has been an illegal dump site and hazardous play area for local youth to a beautiful and highly usable open space for bicycling and walking.

Furthermore, by obtaining this particular piece of property and cleaning up the vacated Carey Boulevard and converting it to the Peninsula Crossing Trail, recreational users will be able to travel essentially from Cathedral Park under the St. Johns

Dear Mr. McDonald:

News of your upcoming retirement from Cascade General, Inc. has reached me in Washington, D.C. As you celebrate this occasion, I wanted to add my congratulations to those you will no doubt be receiving from your family, friends and colleagues.

Your 50 years of service in the shipbuilding and ship repair industry is truly impressive. Your long career has been filled with many "firsts," and you should take great pride in your many accomplishments. Your record of service to the industry and in your union serves as a model to others, and I applaud your commitment.

Again, congratulations on your retirement. Please know that I wish you all of the best in your future endeavors.

Kindest regards,

Sincerely, Mark O. Hatfield

Bridge to Smith and Bybee Lakes, then on to Kelly Point Park. Right now Carey Boulevard is heavily rutted by vehicles, some of which have dumped garbage, old furniture, clothing and yard debris. There also are signs along the path that prostitutes and drug users enjoy the overgrown vegetation to cover their dirty deeds.

I live between the "Cove" property and the proposed trail and long for the day that the public owns the rehabilitated properties so that hikers and bicyclists overrun them rather than blackberries and villains.

This is an incredibly exciting time to live in North Portland. The dump has closed and is providing funds for worthwhile projects in our area. McCormick and Baxter and its stench of creosote has been replaced by cleanup efforts. North Precinct remained in our midst, and citizens are working with police to undermine crime. Work is underway to solve many other livability concerns here.

I hope all homeowners in our region will join me in voting yes on 26-26. It is worth much more to each of us than the price of a pizza and soft drink in annual taxes that it will cost us to save these precious properties from development.

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