

EDITORIAL

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

The progressive community is under attack, especially people of color. The wedge issue being used to drive a much broader regressive an repressive agenda is a affirmative action.

The extreme right-wing has had us under the gun before, yet we have still made progress and won. The Reagan and Bush Administrations attempted to turn the clock back on civil rights, and in some ways succeeded. Yet, even under their administrations, we passed 24 civil rights laws with the support of 85% of the House and Senate, including strengthening the Voting Rights Act by: (1) adding the bilingual dimension; (2) preserving the "results" versus "intent" standards of proof; and (3) extending it for 25 years.

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Affirmative Action Action!

We can win again if we fight back. What we need is affirmative action! here's what to look for and where to act:

The President. The courts made affirmative action more difficult and more costly, but they did not close the door. Therefore, the outcome of

affirmative action will be decided more in the political arena (executive and legislative action or inaction) than in the courts. President Clinton must teach and lead, not just referee and review.

The House. Reps. Canady (R-FL-12) and Fawell (R-IL-13) will soon introduce legislation to outlaw all federal affirmative action programs.

The Senate. Jesse Helms (R-NC) has already introduced legislation to eliminate all federal affirmative action programs. Robert Dole (R-KS) is increasingly becoming a problem. Phil Gramm (R-TX) has threatened to attach anti-affirmative action amendments to legislation. We should be especially watchful of such amendments being attached to one or more of the 13 appropriations bills.

"Along The Color Line"

What Affirmative Action Really Means; Part two

BY DR. MANNING MARABLE
The difficulty in assessing the political and ideological debate over "affirmative action" is that there is no coherent definition within the public discourse on what the term actually means.

Reforms which may be described by liberals as "goals and timetables" for the achievement of gender and racial diversity are characterized by conservatives as "quotas." In general, most white Americans still want to be perceived as being "fair" toward racial minorities and women on issues of discrimination. According to the March 17-19, 1995 USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll, when asked, "Do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs," 53 percent of whites polled expressed support, compared to only 36 percent opposed. Not surprisingly, African-Americans expressed much stronger support, 72 percent for affirmative action programs to only 21 percent against. Despite widespread rhetoric that the vast majority of white males have supposedly lost jobs and opportunities due to affirmative action policies, the poll indicated that only 15 percent of all white males believe that "they've lost a job because of affirmative action policies."

However, there is a severe erosion of white support for affirmative action when one focuses more narrowly on specific steps or remedies addressing discrimination. For example, the USA Today/CNN/GALLUP poll indicates that only 30 percent of whites favor the establishment of gender and racial "quotas" in businesses, with 68 percent opposed. Conversely, two-thirds of all African-Americans expressed support for "quotas" in business employment, with only 30 percent opposed. When asked whether quotas should be created "that require schools to admit a certain number of minorities and women," 61 percent of the whites were opposed, with 35 percent in favor. A majority of whites would also reject policies which "require private businesses to set up specific goals and timetables for hiring women and minorities if there were no government programs that included hiring quotas." On issues of implementing government-supported initiatives for social equality, most black and white American still live in two distinct racial universes.

It is not surprising that "angry white men" form the core of those who are against affirmative action. What is striking, however, is the general orientation of white American

women on this issue. White women numerically have been overwhelmingly the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action. Millions of white women have gained access to educational and employment opportunities through the implementation and enforcement of such policies. But most of them clearly do not share the political perspectives of African-Americans and Hispanics on this issue, nor do they perceive their own principle interests to be at risk if affirmative action programs were to be abandoned by the Federal government or outlawed in the courts. For example, in the same USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll, only 8 percent of all white women stated that their "colleagues at work or school privately questioned" their qualifications due to affirmative action, compared to 19 percent of black women and 28 percent of black men. Less than one in five white women polled defined workplace discrimination as a "major problem," compared to 41 percent of blacks and 38 percent of Latinos. Forty percent of the white women polled described job discrimination as "not being a problem" at all. These survey results may help to explain why middle class-oriented, liberal feminist leaders and constituencies have been relatively less vo-

cal in the mobilization to defend affirmative action.

A quarter century of affirmative action programs, goals and timetables has been clearly effective in transforming the status of white women in the labor force. It is certainly true that white males still dominate the upper ranks of senior management: while constituting only 29 percent of the nation's total workforce, white males comprise 95 percent of all senior managerial positions at the rank of vice president or above. However, women now constitute about 40 percent of the total workforce overall. As of the 1990 Census, white women held nearly 40 percent of all middle management positions. While their median incomes lag behind those of white males, over the past twenty years white women have gained far greater ground in terms of real earnings than black or Hispanic males in the labor force.

In this context, civil rights advocates and traditional defenders of affirmative action must ask themselves whether the majority of white American women actually perceive their material interests to be tied with the battles for income equity and affirmative action which most blacks and Latinos, women and men alike, continue to fight for.

Vantage Point: Independent Politics Needed To Defeat Radical Right

BY RON DANIELS
The November 8, 1994 election which propelled the radical right into power was viewed by Gingrich-Dole and their conservative allies as a mandate to impose the racist and reactionary Contract on America. In reality, however the Republicans have a very shallow mandate. Only 20% of the eligible voters actually participated in that election. Nonetheless, the election did in fact give the radical right the reins of power in the Congress of the United States. This minority regime now has the capacity to make laws, remake laws, undo laws and press for the enactment of the agenda of the radical right.

Regrettably vast numbers of voters, most of whom will be affected by the Contract on America, sat on the sidelines in the last election. In many respects what we really have in the U.S. is the illusion of democracy. Some 65 million Americans are not even registered to vote, and the U.S. has the lowest level of voter participation of any western democracy. Widespread disaffection, alienation,

apathy and a sense of powerlessness permeates much of the electorate. This feeling of powerlessness is reinforced by the knowledge that big money controls both political parties and the electoral political process. Hence we have a kind of "democracy for the few," a fake democracy which plays into the hands of the big moneyed interests who use the electoral political process to legitimize their position of wealth and privilege in this country. The power elite has a very simple creed: "the business of government is business."

As we struggle to Break the Contract on America we must engage the radical right in the streets - massive demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, disruption, but we must also engage the forces of reaction at the ballot box. We cannot allow alienation and apathy/non-participation to give the radical right the reins of power by default. The upsurge of active resistance which is sweeping the country must congeal into a powerful force to sweep the radical right and their conservative allies from positions of power at all

levels in this land.

The legions of non-voters who are sitting on the sidelines, however, will not respond to politics/business as usual. They must feel that their participation will not be betrayed by two establishment parties dominated by the same moneyed interests; establishment parties which are both going in the same direction but argue over how far to go in that direction. The Democratic party, the party of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal is increasingly becoming what one liberal democratic stalwart described as a "kinder, gentler version of the Republicans." The people who have opted out of the electoral political process will not be inspired by a choice between evil and the "lesser evil," a choice between the Republicans and the Democrats.

To achieve this vision we must fight for real democracy in the U.S. The illusion of democracy or democracy for the few must end. The electoral political process must be opened up so that the American electorate no longer has to choose between twiddle dee and twiddle dum. We must

free the electoral political system from the dictatorship of private money. The struggle for real democracy must include a number of pro-democracy reforms: publicly financed elections; equitable access to media for all candidates; fair minimum ballot access requirements to allow independent parties and independent candidates to compete on a level playing field; and proportional representation.

Ultimately, we need a fighting new independent progressive party that will uncompromisingly stand up for the rights of people of color, poor and working people and the struggling middle class. The new America which must become will be fashioned out of the dreams and aspirations and the energies of those who have been most affected by oppression and exploitation in U.S. society. The days of the radical right with their ideology of white supremacy and white male domination are numbered. We will Break the Contract on America and a visionary independent political movement will forge a new covenant for a new society.

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

Development Is The Issue In America's Schools

BY DR. LENORA FULANI
Since the United States Supreme Court's landmark decision Brown Vs Board of Education more than forty years ago, America's school system has been a battle ground where issues like desegregation, funding, and community control have been hotly contested.

For all of the victories we have won over the years on the education front, most experts agree that the quality of public schooling in this country, particularly in our inner cities, continues to decline.

Nowhere is this more true than New York City. However, the central issue in the current debate among

Mayor Giuliani, School Chancellor Ramon Cortines and the Board of Education has been whether or not to introduce police officers into the schools to ensure the safety of the students. And now that Ramon Cortines has resigned (effective in October), the latest political football is which administrative body (the Board of Education or City Hall) gets to pick the next chancellor. Surprisingly, an issue that is ignored in all this is how to transform New York City's schools into institutions where children can learn and develop.

As a developmental psychologist, I am profoundly concerned about the safety of our young people. But, whoever wins the debate over school security or who should be the new chancellor, the question to ask is, "How do we support our young peo-

ple to become learners? How do we create environments in which growth -- not safety -- is the primary issue?"

I have helped to found the All Stars Talent Show network, which is widely recognized as one of the largest and most effective anti-violence programs for inner-city youth in the country. For the last decade the All Stars youth, from the country's poorest communities, have produced a highly successful and cost-effective alternative to violence; they are the ticket sellers, the stage hands, the emcees, the security and, of course, the performers. In the 1994-95 season the All Stars involved 30,000 youth in New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Boston and Miami in a developmental activity that supports them to be leaders and learners. And all this without a penny of government money.

perspectives

How Good Can It Get? More Inspiring Reading

Well, how about a factual and non-racist book that accurately traces the timelines and dynasties of 170 Egyptian Pharaohs, African Kings and Queens?

We have just that in "Chronicle Of The Pharaohs: The Reign-By-Reign Record Of The Rulers And Dynasties of Ancient Egypt," Peter A. Clayton, Thames And Hudson, 1994.

Beautifully written in a narrative, yet sequential for the "Chronicle" presents biographical portraits of each



By Professor McKinley Burt

pharaoh built into a comprehensive and immensely readable history of this part of ancient Africa. There are datafiles for each pharaoh listing key information such as royal titles, place of burial, and family relationships, etc.:

Djoser, Akhenaten, Tutankhamun, Ramesses the Great - Hatshepsut, Nefertiti, Cleopatra. Peter A. Clayton is an Egyptologist, archaeologist and numismatist of international repute who has excavated at sites in both Africa and Egypt. He is a member of a number of related professional societies and is the editor of "Minerva: the International Review of Ancient Art and Archaeology."

The book sells for \$29.95 and is well worth it.

Since obtaining this book a week ago from the Looking Glass Bookstore at 318 S. W. Taylor, I have not missed a single day of marveling at its scope and seeking to establish point-to-point correspondence (and verification) with my own decades-long assembly of articles, quotes, photos and other data.

I also wish to compare the material with the "Penguin Guide To Ancient Egypt," Dr. William J. Murnane, 1983. That book, considered by many as a sort of "bible," is cited by the author.

This chronicle of an African history whose ancient contributors antedated all the rest of the world in structuring its language, mathematics, astronomy and architecture will prove invaluable not only to the general reader, but to the many students and practitioners of both the Christian and Judaic religions. Many will be interested in correlating the sojourns of Joseph and his family and

matching the times of Moses and the Exodus with the reigns of particular Pharaohs. Biblical cross-reference is easily achieved.

There is no want of excellent color photographs of the statues, buildings, stelae, sarcophagi, furniture, jewelry and other artifacts. Also, there are useful maps, family trees and other charts indicating significant consanguinity-Important considerations

of geography and economics are taken up wherever that type of support is needed. Religious and other cultural icons are treated in a dignified and respectful manner.

When one is furnished such a scholarly and well-structured treat in place of so much of the tabloid-type sensationalism usually accorded Africa and its rightful place in history, there is a well-justified urge to make quite a fuss. Certainly, if not convinced before, one can now understand Napoleon's awe when he stood before the Great Pyramid at Gizeh and told his troops: "Forty centuries of greatness look down upon you."

I wish that and similar citations of mine had "made the cut" when I was a contractor to the Portland School district's "Baseline Essay Process". But it is difficult to deal with an educational structure that will only admit that Egypt is in Africa when dragged kicking and screaming to the altar of truth. Recent media protestations of "essential revision" to original material still harp on the "sheer fantasy" of Egyptian gliders. That's like the racists who harp on the transgressions of a few "welfare queens", while corporate welfare bleeds the taxpayers for hundreds of billions. This book has no fear of showing that the ancient Egyptians looked like the 1975 Jefferson High student body!

No mistake about it, racists are racists and their "Liberal" facades have long since worn thin. Fortunately, my original research and citations of both African and African American contributions to science and mathematics are being incorporated into CD-Rom and other electronic presentations by two of the nation's largest software manufacturers. You will be able to get the truth from industry if not "educators" this winter. Scientists ought to know!

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