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EDITORIAL

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The Portland Observer

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT The Constitution Is A Black Issue

BY DR. LENORA FULANI

The Congressional Hearings on the government handling of the tragedy in Waco, Texas two years ago began.

Much has been written about the partisan nature of these hearings. Of course, this isn't news. There is no such thing as a Congressional hearing nowadays that isn't partisan. Certainly the Republicans who have (quite properly, in my opinion) initiated the investigation are hoping to do damage to the Clinton White House and to Attorney General Janet Reno. For their part, the Democrats are trying to demonize the Branch Davidian leader, David Koresh, in order to justify whatever action federal law enforcement took in Waco and thereby protect Clinton. In spite of these various agendas, those of us who have been pressing for hearings and a full investigation of the conduct of government agencies in Waco (which, by the way, was initiated by a Republican administration and carried out by a Democratic one) are nonetheless gratified that there is at least the possibility of a public accounting for the government-sponsored genocide.

I was particularly concerned, as the hearings opened, to pursue members of the Congressional Black Caucus who sit on the two subcommittees conducting the hearings. While

aware that they -- as Democrats -- were under serious pressure to conduct themselves in accordance with the overall Democratic Party game plan, I was nonetheless convinced that as African Americans they have the special responsibility to ensure that the hearing process reached beyond the partisan horse trading to discover whether and how Constitutional violations had occurred. Our people have been the victims of constitutional violations since 1787.

Thirty percent of the Branch Davidians at the Waco compound were people of color.

Together with Annetta Richards, a devoutly religious 65-year-old-Jamaican born follower of David Koresh who survived the ATF assault (she left the compound during the negotiations when women and children were brought out) and suffered in jail for over three months, watched helpless as Koresh and her friends were incinerated, and was then deported, I attempted to meet with members of the CBC. I wanted the opportunity for Annetta Richards to tell her story. Her story, by the way, includes the fact that at the moment of the ATF entry, the compound was fired upon from above by U.S. military helicopters. Ms Richards shielded a five-month-old baby with her body to protect it' from the hailstorm of bullets. The government denies that the helicopters were armed.

Ms. Richards and I had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Sanford Bishop of Georgia, Congresswoman Maxine Waters of California, Congressman Floyd Flake of New York, and CBC Chairman Donald Payne of New Jersey. They were touched by the poignancy and horror of Ms. Richards' story. But since these Representatives were not on the hearings panel, they could not bring this viewpoint to the questioning of witnesses.

Unfortunately, however, the five Representatives on the two subcommittees conducting the hearings were apparently too beholden to the Democratic Party leadership to be open to such a meeting. All five refused my request. These were Congressman Mel Watt of North Carolina, Congressman John Conyers of Michigan, Congressman Bobby Scott of Virginia, Congresswoman Cardiss Collins of Illinois and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee of Texas (who told me she would raise the constitutional issues later, in the context of the debate over the new counter-terrorism legislation).

Congressman Watt, I was told, also felt it was the wrong time to consider Ms. Richards' account, given the extent to which the Republicans had an upper hand; he did not want to give them any advantage.

Congressman Watt's comments and the comments of other Black

leaders and elected officials who have strangely insisted that Waco is a "white" issue and therefore of no immediate concern to African Americans caused me to look more closely at the posture of our Black elected officials with respect to these kinds of issues. While some might say that the Black leadership in Congress has been in the forefront of the fight for civil liberties and in defense of the Bill of Rights, I would disagree. When police brutality, government intrusion, violations of search and seizure are directed at Black victims, Black leadership sometimes responds by raising the issue of racism.

Certainly, these attacks are racist. But in my opinion, that is neither the fundamental problem nor the way to solve it. The fundamental problem is that the Bill of Rights and the constitutional Amendments which followed were written and adopted expressly for the purpose of protecting the American people, ultimately including African Americans, from an intrusive, abusive, and authoritarian government.

The Congressional scrutiny of government abuses in Waco, Texas would be an opportune moment to begin such a process. Is the CBC grabbing it, or are our elected Black leaders merely going along with the Democratic Party agenda? Unfortunately, I think the latter is true.

Vantage Point: From Patriarchy To Partnership

BY RON DANIELS

From the moment that Minister Louis Farrakhan called for a Million Man March criticism erupted from some African American women, challenging the motives and objectives of the March.

This criticism was fueled by the initial declaration that the men should march and the women should take off work and stay at home to teach the children on October 16th. The rationale was that Black women have suffered enough, that they have been forced to the forefront of leadership in the Black community because of the abdication of responsibility by Black men. Therefore, the March will be an opportunity for Black men to stand up, assume responsibility and take their rightful place as head of the household.

While some Black women agree with this assessment and requisite prescription for corrective action, other Black women take offense at the assumption that a patriarchal

model of the Black family and the role of Black women in community life should be fostered and perpetuated by the Million Man March. From the beginning there has been the potential that the role of women in the Million Man March, or lack thereof, could become a divisive issue detracting from the importance of this event as a major mass action. Hence, the March leadership has grappled with the issue of whether the march would promote patriarchy or partnership.

There are legitimate reasons for organizing an all male march (or an all female march for that matter). There is no question that within a patriarchal system of White supremacy, much of the effort to subdue the African community has been directed at breaking the Black male. The chronically high incarceration rates of Black Men and persistent depression levels of unemployment and underemployment are indicators of the historical attack on the Black male. This brutalization and criminalization of the Black male

has contributed to the crises of drug trafficking, crime, violence and fratricide which now plague the Black community. Consequently, many Black men are unable or unwilling to shoulder their responsibility; for sharing in the leadership of the family, community institutions and the Black Freedom Struggle.

A Million Man March as a mass action which seeks to address these circumstances is on the mark. However, as some Black women have correctly pointed out the Million Man March should not convey the impression that the crisis in the Black community is simply a crisis of the Black male. The suppression of Black women outside and inside the Black community is also a historical fact of life. Contrary to the image of the Black woman in leadership, for much of our history, the Black church, major Black institutions, the civil rights organizations and the Black Freedom Struggle have largely been led by Black men. The reality was, and to a great degree still is, that Black women do the trench work and

Black men do the leading.

Black women are also bearing the brunt of the present assault on the Black community.

More and more Black women comprise the statistics of the prison/jail industrial complex as desperate conditions drive Black women to commit economic "crimes" to subsist. The growing feminization of poverty in the Black community is also well documented; a phenomenon which is related to workplace inequality and the dramatic increase in single female headed households.

A Million Man March which seeks to address the crisis of the Black Nation must take the issues and concerns of the entire Black community, women and men, into account and be structured and programmed accordingly.

A number of Black women have been making this point, and to their credit the march organizers have been listening and responding.

For information about or input into the Million Man March call: 202-726-5111.

Civil Rights Journal Bottling Real Black Economic Power

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

There's an old saying about finding something good and then bottling it. It's a saying that J. Bruce Llewellyn must have taken to heart as a young man because he made it into a reality as an adult.

J. Bruce Llewellyn was born in Harlem to parents who had immigrated from Jamaica. When he was only 16 years old, he joined the U.S. Army, where he was made company commander at 19 years old. When he left the army two years later, he opened a retail store in Harlem while attending college at night. After earn-

ing a bachelor's degree from the City University of New York, Llewellyn earned a law degree from New York Law School, an MBA degree from Columbia and a degree in public administration at New York University.

As a young black man in the 1960's, Bruce Llewellyn turned to government and politics. While he served in significant positions in the city and federal government, somehow he must have known that his real strength was in business. Bruce Llewellyn is an entrepreneur par excellence.

In 1969, Llewellyn bought Fedco Foods Corporation, which was then

a chain of ten food stores in the south Bronx with gross sales of \$18 million annually. Other buyers had shied away from this potentially lucrative business because it was located in a poor and predominately black and Hispanic section of the city. But Bruce Llewellyn knew that poor people buy food too and by 1984, when he sold Fedco, it had become the nation's largest minority-owned retail business with 29 supermarkets, 900 employees and grossing \$100 million annually.

Today Bruce Llewellyn is the Chairman and a majority stockholder of the Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling Company, which he bought

in 1983. Five years later he bought the Coca-Cola bottling operation in Wilmington, Delaware. The Philadelphia Coca-Cola Bottling company has 1,000 employees with \$290 million in sales annually.

Bruce Llewellyn is living proof that African Americans can excel in business and, when given the chance, can become successful entrepreneurs. Now, if we can only bottle his experience, his gifts, his savvy and his ability to overcome discrimination and stereotypes, economic development in the African American community could become a reality.

Then we'd have real black power.

and for such a long time.

The jury system must be reformed. Most people cannot afford to leave their jobs for such a long period of time.

Thus, juries are composed of retirees and the unemployed. As well, jurors can be excluded for any reason through an attorney's use of peremptory challenges. This method is used oftentimes to remove blacks from juries.

The conflict amongst the jurors would have been avoided. Reform of the civil jury system has already gone through congress - awards are limited to three times actual damages or \$250,000 for punitive damages.

Some reforms are needed for criminal trials as well.

perspectives "Oregon Shakeup", Feel Like You Are Watching A Bad Movie?

Hey, what can I say? If I hit a few hole cards in last week's 'Perspectives' article, so be it. I do appreciate the phone calls and several 'personal' letters, but I do wish you would address those critical concerns "to the editor" of the Portland Observer for publication. The entire community needs to be made aware of the urgencies felt by its members (Find address on page 2 of any edition).

One reader went so far as to submit her list of class A and class B "gatekeepers". The lady expresses great concern that the thought-provoking (or fear inspiring) Oregonian article, "From Benefit To Burden", might give birth to a number of "Quislings" in our community. "Quisling" was the term the Norwegians applied to their versions of Uncle Tom, the traitors who betrayed their nation to the Nazi invaders during World War II.

Class A gatekeepers were described as the classic no-holds-barred Uncle Toms or Aunt Jeminas whose escapades and reactionary viewpoints are widely known. The reader named the blockers who fought Ron Herndon's long effort to improve the quality of education for black children in the Portland School District, among others -- and those who aid and abet some large employers of minorities in the 'out source' of formerly good jobs with benefits and pensions to the level of "temporary workers" with no future.

Others fear the emergence of 'native sons' who will emulate the ugly performances of a number of Uncle Toms making the national news. One reader so aptly captures the essence of Clarence Thomas: "Our obsequious little darky" (Sic) on the Supreme Court.

Another one, fearful of republican wrath, pretending that Affirmative Action didn't get him where he is."

But, the most outrageous per-

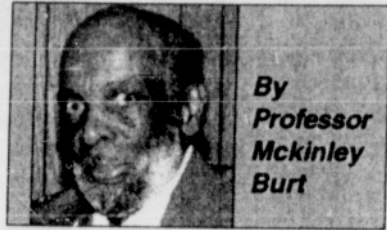
formance of all on the national scene is the vote of the University of California Board of Regents to kill Affirmative Action. A black (?) businessman, Ward Connerly, spearheaded the attack. "Leveling playing fields for all Americans somehow seems offensive to this 'Negro', now that he has gotten his", says one reader. Ward's business venture has received over \$140,000 in government affirmative action contracts. Not only is there a direct tragedy for minorities, but there could be a loss of

billions in federal research contracts in the financially-strapped state.

To return to our correspondent with the "Class A and Class B Gatekeepers", the reader perceives the latter group as "just as dangerous, perhaps more so." Included are the "haive" and both the "ingenuous" and "disingenuous". In other words, the dumb as well as those who like to 'play' dumb or crazy.

I appreciate the reference to a point I have made several times in the past -- even to students in my University classes, years ago. The young, flush with ambition and busy with goal-setting (vulnerable to the clever blandishments of the system) are often used and exploited by the establishment as 'control agents' -- placed in apparent control of community programs or processes, there by enabling the powers - that be to avoid or ignore the input of older, more experienced members of the community. A more gentle way than Urban Renewal (Removal).

Many times this is accomplished by manipulation of job descriptions, or by 'importing' special minority talent whose vitae promise that they will bring no agitation, anxiety or confusion to the plantation. As I've said here before, "what else do you think a controlled 'board-of-directors' is created for?" Can it be that blacks need new types of organizations?... Of the people, by the people, and for the people?



By Professor McKinley Burt

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Simpson Trial Shows Reform Needed In Jury System

BY ERIC H. KEARNEY

As another juror in the O.J. Simpson trial bites the dust, one wonders how fair is the jury system in the United States.

There are amazing swings in the system. In criminal trials, for a defendant to go free, requires only one juror to disagree with the majority. In civil cases, the jury is oftentimes given wide latitude in the amount of monetary damages it can award.

The Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution guarantees the right to a trial by a jury of one's peers. It seems that those who have money or fame are rarely found guilty. Perhaps it is because their peers do not serve on juries or peers for these

individuals cannot be found.

Further, many of the results that juries reach seem implausible. Take for instance the Rodney King beating trial. The videotape seemed to indisputably convince most of the country that the police officers used inappropriate and excessive force. But the jury saw things differently, finding the club-slipping police officers, who could only summon respect for authority through a gang beating, innocent.

With the O.J. Simpson case, we have seen a jury argue amongst themselves and even protest about the length of the trial and the conditions by wearing black. Some jurors, it is reported, are passing notes and preparing to write books. This behavior

certainly jeopardizes the likelihood that Simpson will receive a fair trial.

It seems that the Simpson jurors are as much in prison as Simpson. They are sequestered; they have scheduled meetings with their loved ones; they cannot carry on normal conversations with friends, and they can only read edited materials or watch edited television. It's a rough life.

They have broken no law, but the way in which they are treated, it certainly seems that way. This is no incentive for people to participate in this form of public service; it should be noted that 55% of those asked to serve on a jury don't bother to show up. In fact, what type of person would want to serve under such conditions