

# EDITORIAL

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

## Civil Rights Journal: Ending Racism On Our Campuses

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

The topic of race relations is on everyone's lips for the moment.

It is a time when a million African American men send the signal that they will not sit idly by and be stereotyped, written off and forgotten. Thanks to the O.J. Simpson Case, it is a time when millions of white Americans are confronted with our nation's differing perceptions about the criminal justice system. It is a time when a horribly misleading, inaccurate, but brilliantly written and dangerous book pronouncing the end of racism gets great media coverage, while a powerfully moving, insightful and frightening book on poor children of color living in the South Bronx gets little, if any, note.

Events of the autumn have made race relations, racism and racial justice the issue of the moment. But the more important question for the na-

tional conversation is not whether race is the issue of the moment, but whether it will be the issue of the rest of the century. As some clamor for a 1990's Kerner Commission study on race in America even though the 1968 report has been all but ignored, the more important question for our nation is what are we going to do about the educational inequities, about the housing segregation, about the lack of economic development in communities of color that we already know exist across this nation. The most important question is not what are we saying about race relations and racial justice, but what are we going to do about the fact that we are still two nations, separate and unequal.

Even as I write this, I have a telephone message from a graduate student suffering from racism on her campus. When I called back, I hear the same story I heard from another African American woman on the

same campus last year - a story of misunderstanding, a story of pain and a story of a deep gulf even among our young people. Racism is alive and well in America, and perhaps even growing.

What are we as individuals prepared to do about it? What are we as parts of institutions prepared to do about it? How can we really wrestle with this demon which so few want to admit still lurks beneath both public and private relationships?

One group has taken up the challenge. Iris Films is a Berkeley, California based group which has produced a series of videotapes showing real life college students talking about race and confronting their own race-related beliefs and practices. Called Skin Deep and Talking About Race, these tapes show the students dealing honestly and openly and sometimes painfully with each other during a week-end retreat. It is accompanied

by a workbook facilitation guide which has been put together by a number of college educators and which can be used in showing the films to other groups.

If our colleges and universities produce the next generation of leaders for our nation, then no student should be able to graduate from college or from graduate school without having had such an educational experience.

Only if our colleges and universities take this challenge seriously can our nation be prepared for the next century -- a century where there will be no racial/ethnic majority in this nation. W.E.B. DuBois predicted that race would be the significant issue for our nation during this century.

(For information on Skin Deep and Talking About Race, write Iris Films, 22-D Hollywood Ave., Hohokus, NJ 07423 or call 1-800-343-5540.)

## The African American Leader And The Million Man March

Presently there is a great deal of confusion in the African American community concerning its leadership.

As it becomes increasingly apparent that the old guard is out of touch with those most at risk in our community, as well as, the average self-aware African-American, a void is evolving within the Community that someone will eventually step into. For now that someone appears to be Minister Louis Farrakhan. If men and women such as Congressman Lewis from Georgia and others of the professional civil rights establishment could realize that marching with King during the sixties does not give them a monopoly of any kind on the experience of racism in America, nor is it a litmus test for the accuracy of one's judgment when it comes to the "ways of white folk" we might be able to move beyond the mire into which our community has fallen. Racism today has its own face. It is even more sinister and diabolical than ever before and must be understood on its own terms, the preoccupation with who did what to get rid of the culturally cumbersome and interna-

tionally embarrassing segregation signs is not the criteria for selecting our leadership today. Those who have "made it" off the advances of the civil rights movement of the past and transformed the movement into a career choice sound as if they are trapped in a time warp and cannot see far enough past the sixties to allow the ninety's to speak to us in their own terms. This is the cause of the frustration of our people, particularly what our young men and women are experiencing, their experience is not being articulated and our present day experience cannot be forced onto the procrustean bed of the 1950s and 60s and their aspiration for freedom is being so badly refracted through a manipulative press with their deeply skewed yet nuanced appreciation of what is going on, that the cultural milieu has become repressive. The repressed aspiration for freedom is returning with vengeance, in what appears to be a disregard for "law and order," and the reckless, often manic bravado we see in so many of our young men and women and hear in their music - particularly Rap.

There has been a lot of resistance to the Million Man March in

African-American Christian circles because they object to the leadership. But the fact of the matter is that others are taking the leadership in the struggle because the African-American Christian establishment has failed to select leadership able to respond appropriately to the challenges of our time. The nation's largest African-American Christian organization, the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc. in a prime example. We have failed to read the signs of the time and we have failed to respond adequately to the pervasive hopelessness that saturates the community. Minister Farrakhan therefore appears to be a glimmer of light in an otherwise dismal situation.

Whatever your position on the Honorable Minister may be the fact of the matter is that his success is directly attributable to our failure. I speak here as a Christian Pastor and a member of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc. The key issue is competence. We must have leadership that is capable of responding to the challenges of the present hour, at present we do not. The choice of Rev. Jesse Jackson to represent our convention and be our spokes-

person on civil rights and the vulgar repudiation of Rev. Jackson's support for the march, came from the same man. Dr. Henry Lyons' best response to the Million Man March and the crisis to which it attempted to speak was a knee jerk rhetorical reaction consisting of poorly developed ideas, that were hastily arranged and thrown to the convention floor in a calculated effort to elicit an emotional response. When the furor died down we were left with confused signals and uncertain sounds. That is precisely the kind of leadership the nation's largest African-American Christian denomination can ill afford at this critical juncture in our history.

We must rise to the occasion and the challenge Minister Farrakhan has posed and elect leadership prepared to face this crisis, which is deeply spiritual in nature. If we continue to make poor and irresponsible choices in determining our denominational leadership and fail to fill the void, we forfeit our claim to the spiritual leadership of our race. If we do not adequately respond to the void we can not blame Minister Farrakhan for filling it or the people for responding to his call.

## perspectives

### The triple Threat Attack On Business As Usual

**"It's a wrap", as they say in Hollywood after where ever the successful filming of a critical scene. Was it ever as we capped four hectic weeks of reporting and analyzing, first, a trial of errors; then a media gone berserk; and, not least, a groundbreaking 'March' with national and international implications.**

The feed back from the readers has surpassed even that from the "Hawaii Series" (Original population documented to be African), or the revelation of the early European Syphilis locus (17th-century letters in European archives bear advice from European sailors: "To get rid of your syphilis, lay down with a black woman with malaria and the ensuing fever will cure you"). So much for early Medicare, European style.

The triple threat attack on the complacent of both races certainly bodes for a turbulent future for what the media euphemistically refers to as "good race relations." Even some of my most timid African American friends are beginning dialogues in areas they would not dare have entered just months ago. One fellow who, rain or shine, has been passing me up at bus stops for a dozen years, actually offered me a ride last week (I wouldn't read anything too earth-shaking into this).

More serious aspects of a northeast Portland response to events of national consequence deal with questions being put to those "appointed or anointed" leaders I refer to so often. Of course, it is much too early for most queries to be further along than the formulation stage, but even at this point I am hearing from readers about the "tough questions" they are structuring.

Most interesting is the number of Portland African Americans who are in communication with friends and brethren across the country--many for the first time in years. The trial, the media aberrations and particularly, the March have combined to create a "Global Village" phenomenon among blacks, the likes of which have not been seen in this century. They are exchanging data

at a feverish pace: Business opportunities, real estate access (homes and commercial), police tactics, media treatment, marriage and family counseling, you name it. Not just survival techniques, but futures.

The important thing, blacks say, is that there is a new, in depth sense of unity at hand--nevermind how or by whom or what venue. While most whites are simply watching in

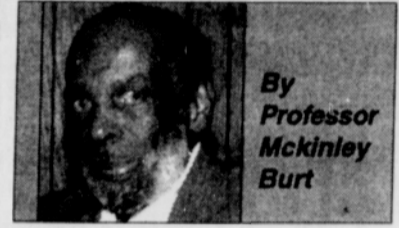
amazement (hesitant to broach a question to their closest black acquaintance), others, like truculent media-types or long-time king-

makers on the plantation are going around petulantly questioning all and sundry who will talk to them.

My most interesting exchanges are with whites in the Beaverton and Hillsboro areas where, as I have mentioned before, there are a great number of my former students at the university who now are involved in the electronics and space age industries. And then, too, there are my monthly encounters with fellow members of the Associated Oregon Industries organization.

True to form, as I've found them through the years, business people are the most circumspect and sophisticated in making what might prove delicate inquiries. I think it is the 'marketing' profile. "Let's be careful here, I could blow a future sale". Interestingly I have received a number of requests to make presentations at service clubs and for industry groups on what I've been describing near and afar as that "Triple Threat Attack". And you know I don't bite my tongue!

Equally as interesting is the fact that for the last ten years the only local information and citations on Black Inventors has been from whites--either former university students or associates or U.S. Forest Service personnel in the Tri-state area whom I met years ago while contracting with the agency. Already, since the March several blacks have called in this respect, and one brought by a book listing several early black inventors not in my book. Will wonders never cease.



By Professor McKinley Burt



## Letter To The Editor

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

## Slash Congressional Perks

BY NORMA PAULUS

This Congress was supposed to clean up the ethics in Washington, D.C., but so far it has failed to deliver.

Congress should enact several important reforms before it goes home for Thanksgiving. It's time that members of Congress remembered to do the public's business and stop playing to the special interests who pay to get them re-elected.

One of my accomplishments while in the legislature was seeing that a law was passed requiring lobbyists to register their affiliations and report their spending on legislators. This law brings lobbyists' dealings into the light for all to see. Believe it or not, thousands of lobbyists in Washington, D.C., now escape an ineffective registration program. The don't even have to report

who they represent in the back halls of the Capitol building. I want to change the way Congress does business with special interest groups.

The first goal should be to tighten rules governing gift-giving by lobbyists to congressional staffs. If Congress wants to show it isn't for sale, this is the place to start. The Senate approved a bill on lobbyist gift-giving in July, but it still sits like an unwanted orphan in the House.

The public is angry when it hears about the permitted flow of gifts to members of Congress and their aides. Legislation should be adopted to stop them from accepting any gifts, including meals and expense-paid trips like golf, ski and tennis outings. Winter trips to Florida and the Caribbean should be outlawed before the winter holidays when the congressional geese once again migrate south to these warm vacation spots.

Stopping the revolving door of members of Congress who become lobbyists once they are defeated for re-election is another needed reform. We elect our senators and representatives to serve us. When they have finished their term, they should come home instead of joining the special interests and lobbying their colleagues around the House dining room and gymnasium.

Members of Congress need look no further than their own offices to see where reform should begin. Congressional staffs are bloated. When business needs to spend less money to balance the budget, payroll is an obvious place to look. Why should Congress be exempt?

Instead, Congress does just the opposite. When its budget is out of balance -- as it has been for 40 years -- it hires more staff to make excuses to constituents. Those who have been

in congress longer and have more seniority hire even more committee staff to help them stay in office.

Election financing begs for congressional attention. A Senate-passed bill has an important provision to ban "soft money." It limits contributions to candidates by individuals. However, it does not limit contributions from unions and corporations, and that money flows into party coffers and out to candidates with few restrictions.

Senior members of Congress should be leading the charge to reform the federal legislative system. But it has been freshmen Republicans like Rep. Linda Smith of Washington state who have fought hard to change the system. We have had enough of business as usual. The House needs to pass a strong election law and ethics bill. As a United States Senator, I hope to join with other Republicans seeking these changes.

## Latin American Influence

In her letter printed 26 October 1995, Hedy Kraus points out the influences of Spain on the studies of children in Portland, correcting Richard Read's indication that only "Latin American Spanish" is taught in the schools here. While the two are talking about the same language, they are not talking about the same dialect.

If Kraus is right it's a pity: American Spanish -- the other adjective is a redundancy that she should have spotted -- is what all children of our city could use to advantage. Now let me get to the point.

I do rather resent the parallel Kraus draws between America's relationships with England and with

Spain.

The only good thing to come to America through Spain, missionaries of the Faith, got here despite the bureaucracy of a church built on rock and not faith. And that church owes much of its ugliest, most civilized present and past to the Spanish Crown, enemy of the Faith since ancient times.

The dialect of the Mexican workingman is good enough for Cesar Chavez. It's good enough for us. And Castilian, the dialect Kraus advocates, for which the NEA will probably send her to a convention in Madrid, is bad enough for the Spanish elite.

Let the Spanish ruling class keep its hissing tongue where it belongs -- between its teeth. And off my kid.

Sincerely, D. Ben Saxe

## Thank You

I'd like to say thank you to the many readers of the Portland Observer who contributed to United Way during Campaign '95. Your generosity is overwhelming.

No one involved with the fund-raising drive can ever thank you quite enough. Every dollar counts, and your donations will help thousands of people receive assistance from agency programs in our community.

Local individuals help decide where your contributions should go. They are people like your neighbors and co-workers who learn about local needs and then decide where your dona-

tions can do the most good.

You'll help the teen mom down the street learn how to care for her new baby. And the family next door who needs a box of food to make it through the month.

You'll help the young people in your neighborhood turn away from drugs and crime. And provide assistance so elderly people can stay in their own homes.

Your one gift does so much for so many. Thanks for making a contribution to United Way.

Sincerely,  
John G. King  
1995 General Campaign  
Chairman, President and CEO  
of Legacy Health System

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