

EDITORIAL

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

History is full of irony, but none more ironic than the night Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. was elected to Congress from the 2nd Congressional District of Illinois.

One hundred and twenty-five years ago, on December 12, 1870, Joseph Hayne Rainey of South Carolina was elected to fill the unexpired term of Congressman Whittenmore. The Honorable Joseph H. Rainey, Republican of South Carolina, became the first African American member of Congress.

One hundred and twenty-five years later, on December 12, 1995, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. was elected to Congress and will become the 91st African American ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives--to fill the unexpired term of former Congressman Mel Reynolds.

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Mr. Jackson, Jr Goes To Washington

There have been four African American members in the U.S. Senate in the history of our country: Hiram R. Revels (R-MS) 1870-71; Blanche K. Bruce (R-MS) 1875-81; Edward W. Brooke (R-MA) 1967-79; and Carol Moseley Braun (D-IL)

1993-Present. Africa-Americans In The U.S. Congress, 1870-1995: Joseph H. Rainey (R-SC), 1870-79; Jefferson F. Long (R-GA), 1870-71; Robert B. Elliot (R-SC), 1871-74; Robert C. De

Large (R-SC), 1871-73; Benjamin S. Turner (R-AL), 1871-73; Josiah T. Walls (R-FL), 1871-73; Richard H. Cain (R-SC), 1873-75, 77-79; John R. Lynch (R-MS), 1873-77, 82-83; James T. Rapier (R-AL), 1873-75; Alonzo J. Ransier (R-SC), 1873-75; Jeremiah Haralson (R-AL), 1875-77; Robert Smalls (R-SC), 1875-79; James E. O'Hara (R-NC), 1883-87; Henry P. Cheatham (R-NC), 1889-93; John M. Langston (R-VA), 1890-91; Thomas E. Miller (R-SC), 1890-91; George W. Murray (R-SC), 1893-95, 96-97; George W. White (R-NC), 1897-1901.

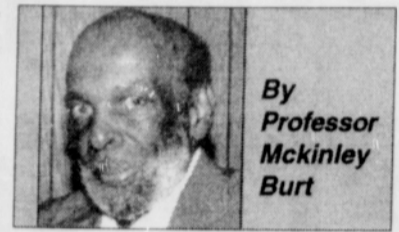
There Was A 28-Year Gap Where No African Americans Were Elected To Congress After The Effects Of The 1896 Plessy V. Ferguson Decision And Other Negative And Violent Political Actions Took Place.

perspectives

Closing Out The year If That Is Possible

You, also, probably have determined that it is getting harder and harder to "close out the year", or anything else in these traumatic times. Nevertheless, we shall endeavor to tie up some loose ends that may be hanging over from tentative speculations, unfinished reports or tongue-in-cheek conclusions derived of recent articles.

Well, that is not exactly right for I know already that like most of the rest of you at this holiday season, I am not about



By Professor McKinley Burt

to torture myself or commiserate about the omissions and errors that may have arisen from journalistic or other mistakes occasioned by righteous indignation.

Having been well-intentioned and fairly conscientious, I shall join the self-righteous New Year's crowd and resolutely swear to do even better during the coming year.

For one thing, that "Jews And Blacks" (or "Gentiles") series, viz a viz the Michael Lerner lecture here in Portland, would have gone on forever, or one day short of infinity, had there been any structured attempt to incorporate all the dialogue and communications generated. A great deal of discussion was provoked by an attribution of statements I am said to have made during a lecture several years ago--and several times during my P.S.U. course on "The African American Economic Experience".

Hey! You've got it almost right: "The majority of books written about the African American experience in America are by Jewish authors." What else is new? Want to argue? Come over and check out my library shelves on black history (or African history).

Check out the classic and approved readings for main-

line university courses in history, sociology and political science: Katz, Herskowitz, Meier, Rudnick, Genovese, Berlin, Rose, Weinberg, Friedman, Boorstin, Hoffman, Jacobs, Tannenbaum, Wallerstein, Wasserman, ad infinitum.

My point was that the African American - his being, personality, sensibilities, world view, personal and social af-

fections, cosmology and basic culture--had become almost the exclusive province of one group of

scholars. A race-based and culturally cohesive group of pedantics who dominated the field and thereby had become custodians of the truth. The black historians were minor league in terms of access to the conscience and ideas of white America (or most blacks) W.E.B. Dubois, John Hope Franklin, Carter G. Woodson, Ivan Van Sertima, Diop, James.

In fact, an article in the Portland Oregonian newspaper made my point very nicely in a full-page article about the African American and his impending loss of jobs in the public sector. The author went into great detail to point out that, in the United States, particular nationalities dominate particular occupations. In this cultural Zodiac, Italians, The Irish, Jews, Blacks and others were assigned specific "houses" of influence with the Jews being domiciled in a communications niche that would surely give them hegemony in publishing.

Another follow-up that was frequently requested, but ignored, was on the O.J. Simpson case. Please, I, like million of others, am completely exhausted by the 'trial' and tribulations of yours truly. If we don't say anything, maybe he'll go away! OK?

See you next year.

Civil Rights Journal

The Gifts Of Life And Love

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

A recent article in Jet magazine pointed out that African Americans are less likely than whites to donate their organs or those of their loved ones who have died suddenly. Yet for the thousands of African Americans waiting for organs, this would truly be the gift of life.

I remember when my own husband died suddenly and in the trauma of it all, organ donation never occurred to me, even though I knew that was what he would have wanted. No one at the hospital ever asked me if I wanted to donate his organs and it was not until I got home that I thought about it. What a missed opportunity for someone who was waiting for a kidney or liver.

But most African Americans refuse to even consider donating their organs. Sometime it is due to superstition or the belief that you won't get into heaven without all your body parts. Sometimes it is due to distrust

of the medical community and the belief that they will take an organ even if you are still alive and don't agree to it. Sometimes it is due to religious beliefs or even a fear of talking about death.

While there are over 11,000 African Americans on waiting lists for organs, in 1993 only 554 African Americans who died donated their organs. An even smaller number donated their organs while they were alive, probably mostly to family members.

Similarly, each year 30,000 new patients are diagnosed with leukemia aplastic anemia or other life-threatening diseases which require bone marrow transplants. Seventy percent of them will not find a match within their own families. And while it's possible for an African American patient to match a donor from any racial or ethnic group, the most likely bone marrow match is from an African American donor.

Bone marrow makes blood cells and because only a small amount is

taken from donors, their bodies replace the marrow within weeks. All donor expenses are paid for by the patient and even the initial blood test is free for racial ethnic minorities because of federal government grants.

The gift of love is on the wish list of thousands of children of color who are in foster care or are available for adoption. The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) is sponsoring a campaign called A Fist Full of Families, with the goal of having 1,000 African American children placed in adoptive families by the end of 1996.

There are 450,000 children in foster homes and institutions nationwide, about 43 percent of whom are African American. Of the 30,000 African American children who want to be adopted, only about 8,600 are legally available for adoption.

Historically, African Americans have always taken in the children of their family members, neighbors and friends, although most of these adoptions were informal.

According to a National Urban League study cited by the NABSW, there are three million African American families interested in adopting children. The task of the Fist Full of Families campaign is to find those families, navigate the social services systems for them and get those children, many of whom are older and have special needs, into the homes of adoptive parents.

Think about being an organ donor. Talk with your family about it. Many states allow you to designate that on your driver's license. It will be the gift of life for someone else.

Think about adopting our children. It will be the gift of love for our future.

(Note: For information on organ donation, call The Minority Organ and Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP) at 800-393-2839. For information on adopting African American children, call the National Association of Black Social Workers at 800-419-1999.)

Vantage Point

The Untold Story Of The Million Man March

As an organizer, if you were planning it according to the book, the Million Man March should not have been an overwhelming success.

Typically a demonstration of this magnitude requires at least a full year of concerted planning, a large paid staff, and the support of major unions, religious institutions and major donors. The Million Man March (MMM) had virtually none of these assets. Instead, the largest demonstration in the history of this nation was a miracle wrought by the spirit/power of God and the ingenuity, creativity and will emanating from the soul of black folks.

Minister Louis Farrakhan initially made the call for the MMM nearly 18 months ago. It was an idea without flesh and bones, or any apparent capacity to implement a project of such enormous scale. The Nation of Islam had no experience at mobilizing large demonstrations of this kind, and in any event this March was larger than any that had ever been attempted in history. Though Minister Farrakhan continued to speak on the idea of a MMM, in actuality the real planning and organizing did not begin until the Houston meeting of the National African American Leadership Summit in May of this year. How then did this idea reach such a dramatic fruition.

In the African tradition there is something called nommo, the power of

the spoken word. Whatever you can conceive in your mind's eye and send forth in the spoken word with faith/conviction can come to be reality - if you can conceive it you can achieve it. Minister Farrakhan conceived it and articulated the concept all across this country, planting in the minds of the Black Nation the seeds that something as awesome as a Million men marching on this nation's capital, the citadel of white supremacy, was possible. There was a spirit moving through him that made him the compelling spokesperson for an idea whose time had come. Hence the Black Nation became convinced that the impossible was possible.

The untold story of the Million Man March is a tale of a people caught in the midst of the greatest crisis since the Post Reconstruction, rising above adversity, doubt, personal and ideological differences and conflicts to make history. Under the leadership of Minister Farrakhan, there was an unprecedented level of cooperation between Muslims, Christians, and traditional African spiritual and religious leaders. There was also an unprecedented level of interaction and involvement between the members of the Nation of Islam and other organizations, leaders and individuals organizing in the trenches at the grassroots within scores of communities across this country. Members of the Nation of Islam and other groups within the community got to know each other up close and

personal as they worked shoulder to shoulder to achieve the impossible dream.

The world also witnessed the unprecedented coming together/pooling of the talent of the Black Nation, on a volunteer basis, to make the MMM happen. Never before have so many formidable tasks and obstacles been overcome in so short a time by a mostly volunteer army. The logistics of bringing a million people to Washington D.C. on a work day are almost unimaginable. In addition, there are the formidable tasks of national and local public relations in a hostile, non-cooperative media environment, fundraising, and the shaping of a suitable program for the event of this significance. With virtually no paid staff, these tasks were accomplished by a volunteer army of community organizers, logistical experts, architects, engineers, public relations specialists, talk show hosts, events planners, production specialists, fundraisers, clerical workers, cultural workers, transportation specialists, security experts, political staffers and a multitude of ordinary people who learned from each other in a collective exercise of on the job training.

When I arrived in D.C. 72 hours before the event, there was still an unbelievable amount to be completed on major aspects of the work e.g., processing the press, completing the program and the production required to make the program successful.

These enormous obstacles were overcome as legions of people from D.C. and around the country volunteered their time, energy and talent to supplement the media operation, augment the program committee and strengthen the production team. Indeed, it was an incredible thrill to see so much talent in the Black Nation joining hands with the sheer will to make the impossible possible. People, women and men, who did not even know each other came together and made themselves into a team overnight in order that the Million Man March might succeed.

Finally, the untold story of the Million Man March is the tale of an event that was totally paid for by Black people. If there is truth to the saying that "he who pays the piper picks the tune," then the power elite and the traditional sources that Black folks often depend on to underwrite large demonstrations must be totally befuddled, because they had no role in financing the Million Man March. Marcus Garvey and the Honorable Elijah Muhammad were smiling as they looked over the multitude of men at the Million Man March eagerly raising their hands with fists full of dollars in a "green wave" of self-determination and self reliance.

The untold story of the Million Man March is the tale of the spirit of God connecting with the soul of a people to make the impossible possible. Long live the spirit of the Million Man March!

Letter To The Editor

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

Congratulations on 25 years of service to Portland! Through those past 25 years, you have been a consistent voice for those that have often been denied access to economic, social and political opportunity. Today we need your voice and your conscience more than ever to help accomplish the ideals for which you have so long advocated.

Sincerely,
Jim Francesconi

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