

EDITORIAL

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

Last Tuesday, Reverend Jesse Jackson (NRC), President Patricia Ireland (NOW), and Reverend Willie Barrow (PUSH) led a delegation of Rainbow.

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Honor Thy Mother: Say No To Mitsubishi!

NOW and PUSH leaders who met with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in the Chicago District Office.

Jackson and Ireland affirmed their support for the EEOC's class-action suit against Mitsubishi for fostering a hostile work environment that permitted widespread sexual harassment of female employees. Jackson and Ireland noted that their organizations have often been strongly critical of EEOC in the past, but in this case they urged the agency to stand firm, and withstand the political and economic pressure the company is bringing to bear.

Rainbow, NOW & PUSH then held a press conference to announce plans for "informational pickets" this past Mother's Day weekend (5/11 & 12) at select Mitsubishi plants and dealerships across the country. [The Chicago- & D.C.-area pickets was Saturday, 5/11.

"This past Saturday and Sunday we launched a Mother's Day's protest and day of action against Mitsubishi," Patricia Ireland explained. "Not only are they intimidating the women who work there, they are using the thought of an impending settlement to divert attention away from the greater issue--sexual discrimination and harassment."

Rev. Jackson called for "economic sanctions against Mitsubishi until its policy of exclusion ends." Jackson noted that the firm had allowed the harassment and intimidation of its female workers, while its motor sales division also has a poor record of providing opportunities for mi-

nority auto dealers. As of last year, of 511 Mitsubishi dealerships in the U.S., only 34 are listed as owned by minorities--and zero of these are African American! Mitsubishi Motor Sales now states that under their two-year old dealership diversity program, minority dealers have grown to 43--22 women, 8 Hispanics, 7 Asian Americans, 3 Native Americans, and 3 African Americans. (Mitsubishi does not stand alone with this poor record--of 10,485 foreign auto dealerships in the U.S. last year, only 161 were minority-owned, with only 21 owned by African Americans.)

Jackson called these numbers a "disgrace," and urged African American, Latino, and female car buyers to "close their purses and wallets to Mitsubishi" until the company reaches a fair settlement with its female employees, and opens up its corporate doors to include all Americans.

Last week, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney also publicly protested Mitsubishi's actions. "We condemn the actions of Mitsubishi management in depriving the women who have brought charges against them of their right to due process free of intimidation."

The EEOC filed its complaint in

the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois, on 4/9/96, taking action under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and under Title I of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, "to correct unlawful employment practices on the basis of sex and retaliation and to provide appropriate relief to a class of female employees who were adversely affected by such practices."

According to the EEOC complaint, from at least 1990 until the present, Mitsubishi has "engaged in a pattern and practice of unlawful employment practices at its Normal, Illinois facility...including:

(a) sexually harassing a class of female employees because of their sex by creating a hostile and abusive work environment based on unwelcome verbal and physical sexual conduct, including sexual graffiti, sexually derogatory and explicit comments and innuendo, and unwanted groping, grabbing, and touching;

(b) sexually harassing a class of female employees because of their sex by conditioning their employment, benefits of their employment, and/or terms and conditions of their employment on their acquiescence in sexual harassment and/or sexual relationships;

(c) harassing on the basis of sex a class of female employees by creating a hostile and abusive work environment based on unwelcome sex-based comments and conduct;

(d) failing to take immediate and appropriate corrective action in response to complaints or other notice of sexual or sex-based harassment and/or retaliation;

(e) retaliating against a class of female employees who have opposed practices made unlawful by Title VII; and

(f) causing a class of female employees to resign their employment because of continued sexual and sex-based harassment and retaliation, thus constructively discharging them."

These are very serious charges, and Mitsubishi Manufacturing should not be allowed to intimidate its way clear of them. No woman should have to put up with this type of behavior on the job. Honor your mother this Mothers' Day--say no to Mitsubishi.

[A related point: the EEOC is trying to handle its district caseload in Illinois with only 9 lawyers, down from 14 only 5 years ago.

During the Ronald Reagan/Clarence Thomas Era, there was a conscious attempt to dismantle the EEOC's power and staff, in order to curtail its effectiveness. But the EEOC has also suffered during the Bush and Clinton years, and continues to lose ground.

This must stop. This Mitsubishi case is critical to all working women, and will send a clear message about sexual harassment to every corporation operating in this country.

The EEOC must get the resources it needs to battle this giant multinational. The President & the Congress must make EEOC more of a priority in future budgets.]

Civil Rights Journal

Murder, Race And The Quest For Justice

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

A few months ago I was in Aberdeen, South Dakota talking about racism and how it survives today, especially in the criminal justice system. The day after I returned I learned of a case only miles from where I had been in which race plays a critical role.

It's the story of Candace Rough Surface, an 18 year-old Sioux, who lived on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Her badly decomposed body was found along the Missouri River in 1981, after she had been missing for nine months. She had been shot five times in the head and back and raped. Her murderer had never been found.

This week 31 year-old Nicholas Scherr was convicted of and sen-

tenced for Candace's murder, ending 15 years of a family's pain of not knowing who had raped and killed their daughter. It was only last year, when Mr. Scherr's cousin, James Stroh, confessed to taking apart in the rape and murder that the case began to break.

Mr. Stroh only confessed because he was caught in a bitter divorce and a family member told the authorities what had happened. At his hearing, Mr. Stroh said he had told a number of people what had happened -- that they had raped and shot Candace in a pasture after a drunken teenage party.

But no one told the police the truth. Mr. Scherr's family is a well-respected one in the neighboring town of Mobridge, where the sports arena is named for his family. And,

"she was just an Indian. Her life didn't count as much," said Candace's niece Polly in an interview with the New York Times.

That's what many native Americans on the Standing Rock Reservation felt -- that local law enforcement officials had not really tried to find Candace's murderer. Then, after the arrest when 100 residents of Mobridge signed a petition to lower Mr. Scherr's bond of \$200,000, many native Americans were angered. It seemed once again that a native American's life was not as important as a white one.

Like many towns near reservations, Mobridge lives with difficult race relations. Like much of America when it comes to questions of race, there are differing perceptions in the white and communities of

color.

While some native Americans now work in the town's stores, many Indians still find themselves followed when they go shopping. Said one resident in the same New York Times article. "Things have gotten better around here. We've moved into the 1970's."

Many Indians feared that a guilty verdict would be impossible. And while some are undoubtedly unhappy that Mr. Scherr did not receive death or life in prison, Candace's mother wanted only for the men who did this to her daughter to be put away. "We want justice. We don't want violence," she said.

Maybe now Candace can rest in peace. But the issues of racism for native Americans seem to be here to stay.

Vantage Point: The Legacy Of Ronald H. Brown

The death of a high profile African American like Ron Brown, inevitably provokes discussion/debate about his legacy.

Was he a champion of the interests and aspirations of African Americans, people of color and poor and working people, or was his success essentially a function of his service to the Democratic Party establishment and the corporate/commercial interests in this country?

I was first introduced to Ron Brown in Youngstown, Ohio by the Director of the Urban League there when Ron was the Director of the National Urban League's Washington Bureau. He was very personable, and I immediately recognized him as a man with exceptional skills and talent. I had further occasion to interact with him during his tenure with the Urban League, but I mostly watched from afar as Ron Brown skillfully positioned himself to be a player within Washington's legal establishment and Democratic Party.

Early on he was a protege of the Kennedy's, eventually being tapped to be Deputy Campaign manager for Senator Ted Kennedy's bid for the Democratic nomination for president in 1980. He subsequently became connected with Robert Strauss a prominent attorney and Washington insider

who served a term as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Brown parlayed these connections into a highly profitable stint as a Washington lawyer and lobbyist. He was well on his way to becoming a Washington insider and what Harvard political science professor Martin Kilson describes as a "transethnic" (race-neutral) politician.

When I next encountered Ron Brown, it was in my capacity as Executive Director of the National Rainbow Coalition and subsequently as Deputy Campaign manager of the Jesse Jackson for President Campaign in 1988. Brown was among the inner circle of advisors that Rev. Jackson convened periodically to discuss the strategy, tactics and direction of the campaign. Though Ron Brown had a reputation as a risk taker, he steadfastly refused to accept the overtures of Rev. Jackson to manage his campaign, apparently viewing the management of an unwieldy Jackson campaign as too much of a risk. After the extraordinary success of the campaign, however, Brown readily agreed to take over the reins of the campaign as Jesse Jackson's Convention manager. Far from being a risk taker in this instance, Ron Brown's decisions as it relates to the Jackson campaign of 1988, revealed what I consider to be an essential dimension of his mode

of operation as a politician, he was a consummate pragmatist.

As Jackson's Convention Manager, it appeared to me that Ron Brown's mission was to prevent Jesse Jackson and the liberal-left-progressive constituencies of the Rainbow Coalition from bolting the Democratic Party. In that sense his allegiance and loyalty was more to the Democratic Party as an institution than it was to the vision and politics of Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition. Ron Brown executed his mission with great energy and skill. The restless Rainbow forces were contained and Jesse Jackson remained inside the Democratic Party. In my view, Ron Brown was rewarded for this exemplary performance by being selected the first African American Chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

As Chairman of the Democratic

Party, Ron Brown the pragmatist was once again at his best. In essence his prescription for winning the White House was to make the Democratic Party more Reaganesque in its platform and policy perspectives - tough on crime, hawkish on defense, pro-welfare reform, fiscally conservative, less liberal and less visibly influenced by the Rev. Jesse Jackson. In that regard Brown proved to be much closer ideologically to the moderate-conservative Democratic Leadership Council, which Bill Clinton helped to found, than to Rev. Jesse Jackson.

More important than ideology for Ron Brown, however, was winning, and his formula/strategy for capturing the White House for the Democrats did indeed prove to be successful.

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perspectives

What Is History, Anyway? Conclusion

In recent weeks I have pointed out the manifold errors and machinations of the racist pretenders to the historian's Craft; Ravitch, Lefkowitz, Herstein, et al.

It is unfortunate that several of this bent would confuse the issue by suggesting that we "assess the character of Achilles or study the virtues of Athenian democracy" through the good auspices of a book by Bernard Knox, "The Oldest Dead White European Males" (serous).

There is nothing wrong at all with his "insightful reflections on the riches and continued relevance of the culture of the Greeks." In the sense that there was nothing overtly fretful in the respective elevations to the bestseller lists of "Closing The American Mind" (Bloom, 1987) or "Cultural Literacy" (Hirsch, 1988). Or have we missed something important here? Is it that we cannot see the forest because of the trees in the way? Have we forgotten that "eternal vigilance" required for survival of an underclass? ("The Disuniting of America,").

Some African Americans have been perceptive enough to sense, if not articulate, the fact that for the past decade there has been an increasing angst or racial unease among the majority population. Blacks are beginning to look under the surface of these classical models of 'Plato's Pond' -- these culture-drenched bestsellers ostensibly designed to revive a faltering American engagement with the very foundation of civilized society. But, there's a problem.

The 'tabloid historians' have made a farce of the scholarly craft of historiography by violating its key tenets; omitting key source or else deprecating other quite valid sources should they present facts that are culturally unacceptable -- like the race of competing protagonists on the world stage. Last week, I told of Lefkowitz's rejection of Greek and Roman testimony that the Africans originated letters, mathematics, astronomy or that the great library at Alexandria, Egypt was important (see her racist polemic, "Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became An Excuse To Teach Myth As History", Basic Books).

It would seem that these "tabloid historians" would have sorely tested the patience (and conscience) of the 'real' historians on the college and media circuits -- but their more legitimate ivory tower colleagues have failed to chastise them, let alone disown them. It was reassuring to find how many readers of the Portland Ob-

server news paper were aware of the growing crescendo of the attacks on the will-documented place in history of people of color. And their stated realization that it is more important than ever, now, for their children to

be motivated by knowing both their past and their capabilities for the future.

And it was rewarding that the readers credited

me with a generation of revealing the sources and documentation of black history that have been deliberately ignored or perverted by racist writers and teachers; stated this last week, and despite the protestations of the revisionists ("New National Standards for Teaching History Win Praise") that I was the first to document for them that the Greek "founders of western civilization originated the practice of taking scalps -- continued through the centuries of European Warfare (detailed on public television re "War Of The Roses", etc.)

The American Indian was described as "barbaric and savage", but the "New National Standards For Teaching History" do not place the true spin on these facts; that the greedy English and French in mortal struggle for the lands of a new continent taught this Savagery to their Indian mercenaries so as to keep count on the number of "dead white European males" generated. The payment could be as high as .50c per scalp.

Several parents said they had steered their youngsters into the medical field after I cited the book by British physician, D.T. Atkinson, "Magic Myth and Medicine", Fawcett pb. 1956 ("The Greeks were notorious thieves"). Like the respected European historians. Breasted, Erman and Ebers, Atkinson documents that ancient African medicine in Egypt and the Sudan antedated that of the Greek in Scope and sophistication -- millenniums earlier in organizing the medical specialties and 'boards' for certification of practitioners, and supervision of written prescriptions (on exhibition in world's museums).

The vaunted Hippocrates is shown to have built 'Greek' medicine on the African foundation; the Greeks having even adopted the Egyptian symbol for the healing arts, the intertwining snakes of the "Caduceus", with the wings on top.

Next week: My "Summer Reading List" of the best in easily available documented black history from ancient to modern; especially what the revisionists/standards people want to remain hidden. It is cultural warfare and 'history' is a weapon.



By Professor McKinley Burt

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