

EDITORIAL

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

A year ago America was in a state of shock and disbelief over the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City, ostensibly by right-wing terrorists.

For years the Center for Democratic Renewal, an Atlanta-based organization which monitors white supremacist and neo-Nazi organizations, has warned that these groups pose a serious threat to democracy in this nation.

The Oklahoma City bomb blast should have been a wake-up call.

For more than a decade, while racial violence and other forms of bias-based violence have escalated, America has been a nation in denial. Federal, state, and local authorities have failed to focus on the damage being done by organizations bent on violently imposing their white supremacist and neo-Nazi nightmare on the world.

Currently this white supremacist and neo-Nazi threat is manifesting itself in a series of fire-bombings of African American churches in the South.

This malicious pattern of attacks may well have gone unnoticed had it not been for the bombing of the Inner City Church in Knoxville, KY. This bombing attack received nationwide attention because Reggie White, the All-Pro defensive end of the Green

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Playing With Fire

Bay Packers, serves as the Assistant pastor of the Inner City Church. Reggie White not only condemned the bombing of his church as racially motivated, he focused attention on the attacks on Black churches throughout the South.

At the request of the National Council of Churches (NCC), I recently went to Knoxville as part of an Emergency Response Team to investigate the fire-bombing at the Inner City Church. The Response Team was convened by the Rev. Mac Charles Jones, Associate to the General Secretary of the NCC.

The experience was quite revealing. Despite the fact that the words, "Kill all niggers" and "white is right" were scrawled on the walls of the church, officials of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as the local and state

authorities were unanimous in their determination to declare that the bombing was not racially motivated.

The Knoxville church bombing is merely the tip of the iceberg. According to data compiled by the Center for Democratic Renewal, 25 Black churches have been bombed since 1/1/95, 16 of which have occurred since 12/95.

All of these churches in one way or another were important centers of support for their communities.

It is clear that the perpetrators of these crimes have targeted institutions which are providing vital leadership and services to the Black community.

The NCC Emergency Response Team correctly called these acts "domestic terrorism." But the nation as a whole is largely ignoring the growing menace of domestic terrorism within our borders. Neither the FBI,

the ATF, nor the Justice Dept. is prioritizing white supremacist, neo-Nazi groups and domestic terrorism as real dangers to the well-being of this society. Indeed, there is widespread suspicion among Black people that government intelligence and police agencies are infested with white supremacist groups.

The dramatic growth of right-wing terrorist organizations and militias, and the escalation of racist attacks against African Americans and people of color is evidence that white supremacy and domestic terrorism are alarming threats to democracy in this country.

Unfortunately, America is a nation in denial.

One more Southern church was burned on 5/16/96, in Tigrett, TN! JaxFax believes it is past time for the Justice Dept. and AG Reno to take these bombings and burnings seriously as racially motivated hate crimes. To fail to act now, is literally to play with fire.

[As Rev. Jackson put it: "What I see is the attempt to make 1996 look like 1896. A combination of burning churches and taking away positions of empowerment ended Reconstruction at the end of the last century. Now we're looking at efforts to end Second Reconstruction--some forces have on white sheets, but others have on black robes."]

Vantage Point

The Accommodationism Of Booker T. Washington

BY RON DANIELS

In 1895 at the Atlanta Cotton Exposition, one year before the historic Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court Decision, Booker T. Washington spoke before an influential gathering of agricultural, industrial, commercial and financial leaders and exhorted southern Blacks to "cast down your bucket where you are." In this widely watched and noted speech, Mr. Washington went on to say: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet as one in all things essential to mutual progress...The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is extremist folly..."

The Atlanta Exposition speech marked the rise to ascendancy of Booker T. Washington as the preeminent leader in Black America. The speech also signaled an accommodation to the system of southern apartheid in the Post Reconstruction era in the South and decidedly played to the interests of the power elites in both the South and the North. North-

ern textile interests and southern agriculturalist had a vested interest in keeping the former slaves locked to the land in the South as sharecroppers, tenant farmers and agricultural laborers. The exploitation of quasi-slave labor meant large profits for the cotton industry in the South and the growing textile industry in the North. Northern industrial interests were also eager to avoid conflicts between a "black horde" from the South and the waves of White immigrants arriving from Europe taking jobs in the industrial/manufacturing sector. Hence, Washington's "cast down your buckets where you are" remark was designed to discourage Blacks from leaving the South in search of the "promised land" in the North.

Washington's counsel to Blacks in the South to avoid "agitation" over social and political questions was particularly comforting to the southern power structure which had broken the back of the Populist revolt where White and Black farmers and workers had united to threaten their

rule. Washington thus emerged as a "trusted" figure who could be counted on to keep Blacks in their place in terms of staying in the South and someone who would keep the peace on questions of social and political equality.

As a consequence, the coffers of philanthropists in the North and South were opened to finance Tuskegee Institute and other projects promoted by Booker T. Washington. In addition, the major establishment media of the day also actively touted Mr. Washington as the kind of reasonable and responsible leader of the "colored" people that White America could do business with.

Butressed by strong support from various quarters of the elite Booker T. Washington established a Tuskegee based machine so powerful that few Blacks dared to challenge his views, opinions or leadership.

Mr. Washington was not without his detractors, however Up and coming leaders like the young W.E.B. DuBois considered Booker T. Wash-

ington an unadulterated "Uncle Tom." Mr. Washington was an accommodationist, but it is sometimes difficult to determine how much of what he articulated was a matter of true belief or simply feeding White folks what they wanted to hear to buy time for a beleaguered and underdeveloped Black community.

For example, Mr. Washington clearly believed that Blacks in the South had made a big mistake by exercising political power with out an economic base, or the education, skills and training to compete in the economy of the South.

Hence, he was a staunch proponent of the values of hard work, thrift and self-reliance. He believed that through practicing the right values and acquiring skills through agricultural and vocational education, Whites would eventually come to accept Blacks as their equals.

And, Tuskegee Institute, which Mr. Washington labored long and hard to build, was unquestionably a beacon of hope and promise for large numbers of Blacks in the South.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To make a submission, write to: The Portland Observer, 4747 NE MLK Jr. Blvd., Portland OR 97211

Here is another viewpoint for residents and workers in North Portland who are still listening to various perspectives on the siting of a new Probation & Parol Office in the area.

I can offer several insights based on my related past experience.

Some neighbors immediately acted on fear when they heard that the decision has been made to site the new office in North Portland. In contrast, I thought: "Good idea! Residents of North and Northeast Portland often express the concern that we need more access to State and County services...not less access to services."

I am convinced that Multnomah

County Commissioners and corrections planners want to help bring greater stability to our neighborhoods, not less. They know we must increase the possibility that Probationers will remain in contact with their supervising officers. Regular reporting in person or in writing is an obligation. It is in the interest of the community to provide closer access to public services, including community-based corrections offices, to ensure success.

Resistance to against the siting situation is motivated by fear. I try not to make decisions that way. Good information can help balance one's fear of the unknown. It might surprise some to hear that one of my best former neighbors was the Multnomah

County Restitution Center downtown. The County's successful program for qualified convicts made absolutely perfect neighbors! Quiet day and night, no extra traffic, a well-maintained building with decent landscaping, clean & sober residents who save money and pay debts to victims and the courts. They also provide volunteer work crews to keep the neighborhood spotless. In fact, I think to increase the possibility of a more stable Probationer population, North/NE Portland neighbors should demand that a residential Restitution Center be sited in our area! This is a model which works. It offers well-paid jobs and teaches stable routines to persons whose lives need intervention.

Citizens (like our County Commissioners) are better off when we seek to be more fully-informed and base our decisions on data, goals and a desire for better access to public-services. This is how we can defeat the political tyranny that fear will otherwise bring us. As a community activist, so I am pleased that more people are active in neighborhood organizations due to the siting issue. Now is the time to resist being mired in blame games and stand-offs. By supporting the goals of community corrections our neighborhoods can become stronger and safer. Let's build bridges and seek a win-win situation. It is time to begin.

Sincerely: Julie Mikalson, Co-nominee, Oregon State Senate District #8

Observations On Memorial Day

BY JESSIE BROWN

Memorial Day has traditionally been one of the most solemn and patriotic days for Americans.

Rightfully so.

Memorial Day is a day when all Americans, regardless of ideologies, race, creed, or political persuasion, join together to remember the sacrifices of those who answered their nation's call.

The significance of this day is sometimes confused or distorted. The true meaning of Memorial Day becomes, at times, distant or vague, lost to commercialism, or drowned in forgetful indulgence. Sometimes there is a failure to recognize the magnitude of the deeds of the men

and women who held true to the notion that evil and tyranny must not prevail.

It is our sacred duty to keep the legacy of our nations patriots forever fresh in the memories of future generations. We are bound by honor to do so. They fought and died to preserve this land of hopes and dreams.

Without the courage, valor and singleness of purpose of our nations veterans, the values that have always made it possible for us to meet new challenges and move forwards a nation, would have been lost.

The freedoms that so many Americans enjoyed did not come cheaply. They were paid for with the flesh and blood of American servicemen and women, and with the tears of those

whose lives were changed forever by the loss of a loved one.

Memorial Day is a day of opportunity to give thanks for all that we are blessed with. It should also be a day that we rededicate ourselves to our community and to America's living veterans and their families in memory of the sacrifices they and others have made.

Veterans will gather to honor fallen comrades on this day --- friend with whom they shared a foxhole or a meal. Their time together may have been brief, but bonds were deeply formed. Life and feeling are intensified when there is sharing of hardship and laughter, fear and loss.

As Americans pay tribute to those who perished, we must be determined

to assure that those who served and returned to us receive proper care and compensation for their wounds and infirmities. We must insist that every veteran has an opportunity for employment, education, and a home in which to live. We must vow that our veterans be treated with the dignity and respect they so richly deserve.

To properly honor our dead, we must honor our living. The defenders of this nation have fulfilled their obligations to us; it is now our duty to honor all of the obligations owed to them.

Jessie Brown is the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He has been a lifelong veterans' advocate. The U.S. Marine Corp veteran was injured on patrol in Vietnam.

perspectives

Our Summer Reading List: Motivating And Factual History; Part I

It seems only proper to follow that three-part series on Black History with a reading list on the same subject.

That series, "Just What Is History. Anyway?" began May 1, 1996 and took a hard look at the craft or discipline we call "history."



By Professor Mckinley Burt

It was noted that this particular approach with its emphasis on critical examination is termed "historiography." And it was expressly stated that there should be an unbiased acceptance or rejection of sources; not a paradigm based on race or cultural one-upmanship. Several readers said they better understood the school districts "hang-up" on the multicultural "Baseline Essays."

Now, we will of course cite many of those books considered "Standards" for the retrieval of valid information on the African and the African American past. But today, I am going to begin by citing several "tested" volumes from my personal library. These are priceless reference texts and you will not run into them every day. It seems so strange that those whom I referred to as "tabloid historians" cannot find the sources essential to a good historiographical approach. I can over on N.E. Alberta.

"Staying Power: The History of Black People In Britain," Peter Fryer, Humanities Press Inc., 1984. This treasure of African history lives up to every praise by the famed historian and researcher, "This book is rare in its mastery of the constant historical contradiction" range and at the same time, event."

The book is fascinating in its documented coverage of the interaction of Africans and whites at every level, including the nobility. Further, the extensive 'chapter notes' and "suggested readings" have proven to be not only factual, but priceless in that they open up even more areas that have mostly been ignored by American authors (for instance I gained new insights into the Revolutionary War and the 'real' role of tens-of-thousands of blacks fiercely fighting the slave masters as "soldiers of the Crown": many retiring to England on pen-

sion" Bet they didn't tell you that in school.

For those who have been seeking documented evidence of the important role in medicine of the ancient Africans, I recommend the following two books. "Magic Myth and Medicine," D.T. Atkin-

son, M.D. A Premier pb., Fawcett Publications 1956 or 1958. Again, a British scholar tells it like it is (was) beginning with the rather sophisticated level of much of Egyptian medical practice.

Further, Dr. Atkinson details how "Greek" medical practice was based on African precedents, "Pythagoras (550 B.C.) thought to be one of the first medical practitioners in Greece. What he knew and practiced appears to have been a direct transference of Egyptian medicine to Greece".

Atkinson details how Pythagoras founded 'his own' medical school at Crotona to which students flocked in "from other parts of Greece, and from Rome". Hippocrates is believed to have been a student there since his writings show "great similarity" to the 'Pythagoras/Egyptian' methods (and see 'Moors-Arabs').

The second book is a jewel among jewels, "The Physicians of Pharaonic Egypt", by Paul Ghalioungvi, prepared for the national Library of Medicine, U.S. Health Service in 1983. Available from the U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Technical Information Service, Springfield, Virginia 22161. This is a product of joint projects between the national Science Foundation and the African Ai-Ahram Center for Scientific Translations (Cairo, Egypt).

This marvelous text covers the scope and breadth of ancient Egyptian medicine; nothing like this organization and sophistication in the Greek Literature: "Physician Scribes, specialists and their titles, Medical auxiliaries, occasional therapists and nurses aides, veterinarians; board-certified, embalmers and bandagers, etc." Excellent charts and outlines/pictures in this 8X11 book.

Continued next week.

The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680)

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION
Established in 1970

Charles Washington--Publisher

The PORTLAND OBSERVER is located at

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Portland, Oregon 97211

503-288-0033 * Fax 503-288-0015

Deadline for all submitted materials:

Articles: Friday, 5:00 pm Ads: Monday Noon

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Second Class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

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Subscriptions: \$30.00 per year.

The Portland Observer--Oregon's Oldest African-American Publication--is a member of the National Newspaper Association--Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc, New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association • Serving Portland and Vancouver.

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