

EDITORIAL

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Civil Rights Journal Not In Our town

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON
Last year this time a grassroots campaign against racism and hate violence occurred in cities and towns across the nation.

Spawed by the actions of citizens in Billings, MT who refused to allow their Jewish neighbors to be terrorized by local white supremacist groups, the campaign was named Not In Our Town and culminated in a documentary aired on the Public Broadcasting system.

As black churches continue to burn in 1996, Not In Our Town once again is taking place in communities which are saying no to racism and are responding with a commitment to end racially-motivated violence and intolerance. This year's campaign began on International Human Rights Day, December 10 and ends with Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday celebration in January. Once again, it will include a documentary, to air on December 23 which will tell the stories of what communities across the nation are doing.

Stories like that of St. John Baptist Church in south Carolina, which was one of the black churches which burned.

For a decade St. John had been the target of racially-motivated hate crimes, including desecrations of the church, its contents and its cemetery on several occasions. Now, mem-

bers of that community, along with labor union members and church members from other parts of the country, are rebuilding St. John.

Stories like two women in Ohio who began a "Not In Our Agency" education campaign for thousands of state employees after an annual Ku Klux Klan cross burning on the state house lawn. Or the follow-up to the original Not In Our Town Story, which occurred in Billings, Montana and includes a look at the quality of life in the Jewish community there today.

Not In Our Town is being used by town and city governments, by schools and ministerial associations. Many programs will focus on young people, helping them to understand the impact of racially-motivated violence. Many cities will use the videotape as a part of their Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations.

In this year of black church burnings, in this year where we see the continuing racism of the criminal justice system and other incidents of racism all across our nation, Not In Our Town is one way to get every community to talk about what racism means in 1996 and the responsibility that all people of good will have to fight it wherever and whenever we confront it. We must all say loudly and firmly, "Not In Our Town."

For more information on Not In Our Town, call (510) 547-8484 or fax (510) 547-8844.

There was an interesting article by Richard Harwood of the Washington Post recently, analyzing voting behavior in the last election by class status.

His conclusion was that big money not only buys special interest influence in election campaigns, but also demonstrates its power at the polls.

We quote from Harwood: "We all know that money talks in politics...But since there are fewer rich people than there are ordinary citizens, it's all supposed to equal out: You have the money, we have the votes. We can always throw the rascals out. The trouble with this formulation is that it isn't necessarily true. The influence of money shows up in the ballot boxes as well. Voting behavior is heavily influenced by social class, meaning our place at the top or bottom of the income and education ladders."

Two groups--people with college degrees, and people with less than a high school education--each make up about 20% of the adult population in America. People with college degrees, though, not only pull in a far

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Voting Top-Down

greater share of income; they also cast 7 times as many votes as people with less than high school education.

*People with less than a high school education cast only 5.5 million votes, a mere 6% of the total (favoring Clinton 2-1).

Jaxfax's conclusion: had people with less than a high school education voted at anywhere near the rates that people with college degrees did, the U.S. Congress would look a lot different today.

*14% of families earn more than \$75,000 a year--they cast 25 million votes, with a large majority for Dole.

*16% of families, almost the same share of the population, earn less

than \$15,000 dollars a year--they cast about 10 million votes, with 2/3 for Clinton.

The obvious conclusion: had families at the low end of the income scale voted in equal numbers with families at the high end, speaker Gingrich would have been replaced.

Harwood makes another interesting point: "The most ardent Democrats were single women, who, in financial terms, are the poorest class of people in the country. They favored Clinton by more than 2 to 1--62% to 28%. Their median income in 1992 was less than \$18,000. For single women with children, the median was \$13,445."

Related voter turnout numbers

have been released by Senior analyst David Bositis of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. From his analysis of voter News Service exit polls and estimates from the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, Bositis concludes that African American turnout rose to a 10% share of the 1996 electorate (up from 7% in 1992, with a large increase among African American males; and that Latino/Hispanic vote share increased to 5% in 1996 (up from 3% in 1992, and earlier reported as 4%). Combine Harwood's analysis with that of Bositis, and one conclusion is very clear: million and millions of lower-middle-class and poor whites stayed home on election day, allowing upper-and middle-class voters to dominate the voting. (Since union voting also went up in 1996, this means these non-voters were largely non-union, most likely people who once were considered "blue collar" workers in the days when the U.S. manufacturing base was strong.)

Do these skewed voting patterns affect public policy? Of course, and in ways distinctly unfavorable towards the poor and lower-income classes.

perspectives

Who Told You That You Were Naked, Part II

Well "sure and begorra and blessed indeed are the saints" as the Irish would say.

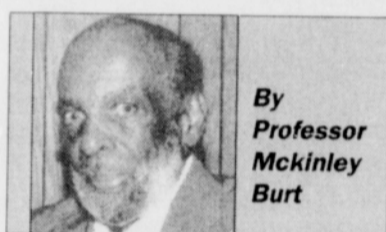
Parents and grand parents were calling me like communications would soon be out of style -- seems that last week's column provoked a bit of activity aimed at retaining some of the terra firma to which African Americans still hold title.

That's cool, a little late (about 35 million late), but a step in the right direction. One "exasperated" woman wrote that even before my more recent disclosures of how well black people of all ages, religions and social persuasions understood and managed their urban infrastructure ("Evidences of progress among Colored People" 1908), I had detailed notable economic progress early on in Northeast Portland.

This reference was to a piece I wrote almost a decade ago on the urban real estate development corporations formed by the black pullman porters, red caps and dining car waiters, during the 1930's and 1940's. These 'non-university' entrepreneurs did not fall under the mantra of Carter G. Woodson's "The Mis-Education Of the Negro" -- but rather, pooling their paltry salaries and their tips, pursued a praiseworthy

tradition which unfortunately did not 'take' with the succeeding generations.

They built and/or took over apartment houses and commercial units



By Professor McKinley Burt

which they either leased or operated themselves. Since these firms were among my very first public accounting clients (1946-1954), I can personally attest to both their financial viability and their solid social integration into the community; supporting many societal functions, charitable or recreational.

The facilities either housed, operated or incubated by these progressive entrepreneurial spirits included contractors, retail stores, restaurants, dry cleaners, billiard parlors, night clubs, record stores, coin-operated amusement device distributors (joke boxes and cigarette machines), dance halls, hotels, grocery, haberdashery, pharmacy, moving and storage.

After the grim reaper of Urban Renewal swept all of this away, with no prescience, intervention or relo-

cation functions instituted by Woodson's "helpless generation of superbly educated sons and daughters". And now, of course, the 'third' generation is for the most part employed by or agents of the 'newcomers' on this feverish northeast stage - where the actors now are federally-funded and are 'pale' imitators of what was or could have been (pun intended).

This is what happens when the 'social engineers' are placed in control of the destiny of a people, when the shrewd, smooth, neo-carpet baggers (or "corruptionists" as Dr. Woodson called them) ally themselves with the establishment media and are enabled to control the leadership from far off academic or banking/economic enclaves. As several parents said last week: "It worked in Africa, it worked in India, it worked in Central America, and for a long while in China, Russia and Indo China. Why not in Albina?"

and, of course, other bitter and disillusioned residents point to these situations and make the connection to the urban terror on the mean streets. They, too, deplore the resulting societal and cultural vacuum where there are no individual or cultural role models, no sign posts and no benchmarks. I've known Rev. Willie Banks

for over twenty-years and remember seeing his "Junior" as an infant. Mr. Banks, a U.S. Forest Service 'computerized map-making technician' worked with me during the 1970's on the programs I developed for the agency's out-reach programs to minority youth. I grieve with him over the recent senseless killing of his son.

But I must grieve too for the nameless child who took away his life -- as I must for the many youth on either side of this frightening human equation. Who told those who are in the roles of power and leadership "that they were naked?" Who told them that it is no longer the case that knowing who you are and what you have accomplished last decade, last century or in past millenniums forms a key element of your education as well your culture?

But there are some of us who have more than adequately demonstrated that African Americans are a far cry from being naked and we have done so in the community, in the classroom, on television, on the lecture circuit and by practical real time demonstration.

Parents are asking is it too late to take back the leadership from the TV spin doctors, the poseurs, the substance abusers, the tired and the social engineers?

Vantage Point: "Campaign For A New Tomorrow" continues

BY RON DANIELS

More than 200 people from 10 cities across the country recently gathered in Philadelphia to assess the 1996 presidential election and consider the idea of forming a new political party. Noted author and lecturer Cornel West, Mike Albert, Editor of Z Magazine, Don Rojas, former Director of Communications for the NAACP, and nationally syndicated talk show host Bob Law were among those who addressed the conference. Convened by the Campaign for a New Tomorrow (CNT), a Black and people of color led multi-racial Independent Political Organization which is an outgrowth of the 1992 Ron Daniels for president Campaign, the

goal of the conference was to review the progress of CNT since 1992 and to discuss the Principles of Unity, Platform and Program for a new political party.

The meeting was characterized by a lively and productive exchange of views about the challenges and prospects of organizing a new political party. Time and time again activists from around the country rose to express their displeasure with the "less-evil politics" of the Democrats and Republicans which largely ignores the interests and aspirations of Black people and people of color. Hence the critical question debated at the meeting was not if there should be a new political party, but what kind of

party is needed and the timetable for organizing a new party. There was a thought provoking discussion over whether the party should be a Black political party, Black led, or Black and people of color led multi-racial party as CNT had originally envisioned it.

There was strong sentiment, however, that whatever the racial/ethnic composition of the party, the objective of the party must be to promote fundamental change and social transformation.

The CNT chapter reports from New York, Washington D.C. and Pittsburgh gave a clear indication that the groundwork is being laid for an independent political party. Ac-

cordingly, the National Coordinating Committee of Campaign for a New Tomorrow resolved to move forward with the idea of creating the Independent Progressive Party. However, there was a clear consensus that much more work is needed to sharpen the Principles of Unity, Platform and Program of CNT and a much stronger organizational and membership base is required as pre-conditions for actually creating the Independent progressive Party.

Consistent with that consensus, the National Coordinating Committee agreed that CNT would become the National Organizing Committee for the Independent Progressive Party.

The Army Sex Scandal: Is It More Than 'Skin Deep?'

BY ASKIA MUHAMMAD

At the Aberdeen Army Proving Ground, north of Baltimore, Maryland, and at the Fort Leonard Wood Base in Missouri, several commissioned and non-commissioned officers have been placed on leave, while they are investigated in a national probe of sexual misconduct in the military.

We now have worse-than-Tialhook-2, a widening investigation of abuse of authority by all-powerful army drill sergeants and recruit company commanders forcing female trainees to have sex with them...or else!

There's no question about it, the guilty should be punished and will be punished. In military life, unlike ci-

vilian life, soldiers can still be prosecuted for sex crimes like "adultery," and "conduct unbecoming an officer."

So far, all 3 men who have been brought up on charges at Aberdeen are Black. At Ft. Leonard Wood, 7 or 8 African-American drill sergeants are under investigation. Therein lies "the rub."

While Pentagon spokeswoman Maj. Natalie Perkins told me: "As far as the Army is concerned, this is not a racial issue," the circumstances smell mighty fishy, even if they don't "look" like they are race-related.

At least one drill sergeant at Ft. Leonard Wood told this reporter that he has been suspended while the Army investigates 10 charges against him, all brought by white females. This

Sergeant insists that at least 7 other colleagues are in the same situation. Black male soldiers have been charged with harassing white female recruits, while no Black females have complained about these same officers.

The sergeant also informed us that before this current outbreak of sexual harassment complaints, he had been charged with 5 sexual incidents, investigated, and cleared of all allegations. Now, he says, all 5 have been reopened and added to 5 new charges as a part of this house-cleaning effort.

In one of the incidents where he was being investigated and cleared, the woman said he offered to lend her money. He said when he learned that she was having a financial problem, he told her that there were facilities on the base where she could borrow

money in an emergency. The other incident, he said, like the first, is a matter of two different interpretations of a situation that in fact happened.

The sergeant said training officers often use the expression: "You owe me," referring to push-ups, or other punitive assignments, when recruits make mistakes. He said a white female learned that she was not going to graduate from basic training and told his commander he threatened her with "You owe me," referring to sex. When asked, the sergeant said, "Of course, I said it. Everyone says it." But he insists he did not mean she "owed" him sex. He also informed that the recruit had already been transferred out of his platoon, and was using the incident to get revenge.