

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL KKK: America's Legacy of Hate

By Bernice Powell Jackson

A few weeks ago the New York Times ran a story about the town of Noblesville, Indiana, a suburb of Indianapolis. It seems a trunk was recently found in a Noblesville barn. Inside the trunk was a listing of many of the town's most prominent citizens of the 1920s, all of whom were members of the Ku Klux Klan. Also packed in the trunk were hoods, sashes and crosses — the Klan's well-known paraphernalia.



Bernice Powell Jackson

The discovery of the Klan list in Noblesville has had different effects on its citizens. Many don't want to talk about this part of their history at all. Indeed, the local historical society, which now holds the Klan list, has voted to restrict access to it and has required researchers to gain the consent of all descendants of the Klansmen, a nearly-impossible task. Some citizens are embarrassed and disgusted by their ancestor's actions; others try to explain away the awful nature of Klan activity, insisting it was more of a social group than anything else.

Try telling that to James Cameron. In 1930, two blacks were lynched in Marion, Indiana, after being dragged from their jail cells by a mob. The mob had also planned to lynch Mr. Cameron that day, but decided at the last moment to let him go. Mr. Cameron clearly remembers the Klan's involvement in his almost-lynching. He started and now runs the Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee, which tells the stories of the lynchings of African Americans across the country.

Try telling that to the family of Vernon Dahmer, Sr. in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Mr. Dahmer, a NAACP leader and store owner, was killed in 1966, the day after he announced that blacks could pay their poll taxes at his store so that they could vote. Mr. Dahmer's accused killer was Imperial Wizard Sam Bowers, who was also linked to the killings of Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman. Bowers was acquitted by an all-white male jury and the Dahmer family is still trying to have the case re-tried.

Klanwatch, the project of the Southern Poverty Law Center which monitors the activities of white supremacist groups, found that even in the 1980s, the Klu Klux Klan was active in Texas, where it operated paramilitary camps and attacked Vietnamese fishermen in Galveston. Klanwatch now warns that while the number of KKK groups today seems relatively constant and there is disarray in the Klan groups, with the largest one fracturing in 1994, white supremacy groups are still active across the nation.

Modern KKK clones might not wear white robes and burn crosses and they just don't live in the South. For example, Pennsylvania state officials say that state now has the largest growth of white supremacist activity in the nation. And white supremacists are alive and well in skinhead groups and, increasingly, in the militia movement. Of the nation's 150 militia groups now operating in 22 states, at least 36 have ties to the white supremacist movement, according to Klanwatch. Indeed, buried deep in news stories about accused Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh have been references to his white supremacist beliefs.

Skinheads, most of whom are young, are also a growing racist movement. A recent National Public Radio story focused on skinhead youth in Allentown, PA., who boasted of beating up gay people and attacking police. In that story Pennsylvania Human Rights Commissioner Ann Van Dyke says that middle Americans want to believe that organized hate groups are disconnected from the mainstream. But Ms. Van Dyke warns that skinheads exist because middle America creates an environment in which bigotry can take hold and that they feed off the resentment of everyday people. Skinheads, she says, say publicly what others say privately.

Just as the people of Noblesville, Indiana have been forced to examine their own beliefs as they confront the racism of their ancestors, so must all of America if white supremacy is ever to be eliminated. White supremacy is not just a belief of the past. America can not afford for it to be a belief of the future.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST & POLITICAL REPRESSION

Continuing The Organizational Struggle

By James S. Tate, Jr., M.D.,
Executive Director, NAARPR

In December 1995, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression-Las Vegas, and other sponsoring organizations will host a People of Color Conference. The conference will tentatively be scheduled at the Grant Sawyer Office Building next to Cashman Field. The focus of the People of Color Conference will be to eliminate the strategy of playing one minority community against

another. We have been trapped into a situation where the African community is fighting the Hispanic community, which fights the Asian community, which fights the African community over crumbs; where will the Clark County School District (CCSD) build a new school? We have to fight over which one of our neighborhoods the CCSD will place a new school, while European communities gets 4 or 5 new schools. This is not acceptable.

The purpose of the People of Color Conference is to make a statement: Our communities are coming together as one. While we may not resolve all of our differences or see eye to eye on every issue, we will come together on major issues (those within political offices and/or political position will take heed and must address our issues).

We will continue the voter registration drive with each person registering 8 unregistered voters, as independents.



JAMES S. TATE JR., MD

This is the same idea purposed by the Minister Louis Farrakhan at the Million Man March in Washington, D.C. on October 16, 1995. It was also made clear to us that if we want something positive done, we have the capability of doing it.

We will make our position clear relative to the CCSD. We have no intention on letting the CCSD off the hook by allowing the Clark County School Board to play on community against the other, as they have done for the past two years.

We will demand to know what the CCSD Recruitment Office has done in terms of recruitment for principal appointments from the African, Asian, and Hispanic communities. If any of those numbers are not satisfactory, there will be a lot of vacancies on the Clark County School Board and the CCSD Administration Offices. I am sure that this will be taken as a direct challenge, and it should be.

There will be more announcements of the developing agenda of the People of Color Conference. We anticipate a major event here in Las Vegas. The communities of color will set the agenda and no one else. For those who wish to address the agenda, they will be welcome. For further information, please call 871-5011.

La Lucha Continua! The Struggle Continues!

NLV...THE WESTSIDE STORY

THE REAL STORY

By R.K. Brown

Recently, a white wo-worker of mine pointed out the fact that the African race is doing bad on its own continent. He suggested that if it wasn't for whites in Europe keeping her economic affairs in check, Africa would not keep up and would fall apart.

Well, I must say that I am never really startled when I hear crazy comments coming from ignorant minds. It can be sure that the greatest economic power in all of Africa is, of course, South Africa. Just as in every standard of racist imperialism spread by European Christians of the last 600 years, this example is extreme.

Here we have Black South Africa with many standards of first world living. While millions and millions of the black majority survive without electricity and indoor plumbing, a very small white minority runs all of the social, political, economic and military machines of the nation, exploiting the land, labor and minds of the black majority.

Incredible! This is the exact opposite of what is occurring in black America. So, of course I had to tell the real story...yes, black Africa, black Australia, black Jamaica, and many other communities have had problems with racist oppression. But, as in the great chapters of history, a people who have deep and unmoving souls can take centuries of oppression and come back at ya!

...Lets really look at this story. It was only 150 years ago that the original man broke free from the oppressive chains. Now we never got the mule or the forty acres, but it was still all good. In less than two centuries we went from freedom to we got to have ours! From King's dream to Malcolm's black power; racism knew uh ohh; ain't no stoppin' em' now.

You can't stop that black spirit. The real sleeping giant! In just 150 years we went from, don't participate, to always dominate. You can't tell the American story without the endless achievements of black America. Sports, entertainment, education, politics, music and the media clearly display the phenomenon of the power and the spirit of the black conscience.

Maybe a minority of whites do have the upper hand in mother Africa; it will only be for a little while. ...the real story is how so few black Americans influence a much greater population of whites here. When you think about it, what a miracle! Our women and children survive and prosper.

Our men do time in the streets, pen and cemetery, but we still scare the DEVIL out of racist hearts. Every law in the '90s seems to be about repealing some act of the civil rights movement. They know, like we do, hey, it is going take drastic measures, even new laws because...black power is like the blackness of space...it's everywhere!
peace...

