

## The Charlotte Post

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## America's reaction to its violence in black and white

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson

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"Why is the FBI being so soft on them? They've got to do something."

The resident of Jordan, Mont. was bewildered that more than a month after the beginning of the siege, a small army of FBI agents waited patiently for a band of 20 Freemen holed up in a Montana ranch house to surrender. The Freemen were wanted for land theft, check fraud and the swindling of banks, public institutions, and businesses of \$1.8 million. The FBI wait-out cost the taxpayers \$300,000 per day and Montana residents an added \$250,000.

FBI officials say they wanted to avoid a repeat of the bloodbath that followed sieges at Waco and Ruby Ridge, which touched off public outrage and congressional investigations over FBI tactics. Ramona Africa was probably bewildered that law enforcement didn't take the same precautions to avoid bloodshed and the destruction of property in Philadelphia more than a decade ago. Africa filed a multi-million dollar lawsuit in federal court against Philadelphia city officials for the March 1985 bombing of MOVE headquarters that killed 11 members. The group was awarded \$1.5 million in damages this year.

Although local police confronted MOVE and the FBI confronted the Freemen, there are similarities. MOVE, like the Freemen, was a radical fringe group. Their members were armed. They had members in jail and a history of prior confrontations with the law. Women and children were in the siege house. Neighbors and area residents complained about them. The bomb dropped on MOVE contained C4 explosive, which was reportedly supplied by the FBI.

But there are also differences between the law enforcement confrontation with MOVE and the Freemen. The Freemen sunbathed, rode horses, danced jigs, received visitors, and plowed their fields in full view of the FBI. Their armed supporters patrolled the back roads keeping the press and on-lookers out. Their sympathizers had an open platform in newspapers, on radio, and national TV talk shows to spout their views. MOVE didn't.

In less than 48 hours, a Philadelphia police helicopter dropped the C-4 bomb on the roof of the MOVE headquarters. Six adults and five children were incinerated, 61 homes destroyed, and 350 residents left homeless. Three days after the MOVE bombing then-Attorney General Edwin Meese told the California Peace Officers Association that the bombing was "a good example for us all to take note of."

The biggest difference, however, between the two groups is that the MOVE activists were black men, women, and children. The Freemen are mostly white males. In the decade since the MOVE bombing, armed white "anti-government" militants like the Freemen have committed dozens of bank robberies, shot it out with FBI, IRS, ATF officers, attacked federal land agents, stockpiled mountains of weapons, openly tested bombs, and conducted military maneuvers. A year after the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, 441 active "anti government" militia groups operate in all 50 states and have paramilitary training sites in 23 states. One hundred and thirty-seven groups have ties to white supremacist organizations like the Klan and the Aryan Nation.

Last July, the Aryan Nation, active in 22 states, held its annual Aryan World Congress near Hayden, Idaho. It drew 200 white supremacists. Militia groups have more than 100 World Wide Web sites to spew their hatred to millions in cyberspace. Their terrorist threats, tactics, criminal activities, and violence are not the stuff of nightly news reports, press features, editorials, and exposes. They are not singled out as a menace to society in national debates over crime bills, three strikes legislation, the death penalty, and prison construction. In the immediate aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, there were no mass raids on their headquarters or roundups of their leaders. Clinton and political leaders assured, and the media demanded, that their civil rights and civil liberties be scrupulously respected.

The public veil over white violence is in stark contrast to America's open assault on black violence. In 1995, one out of three young black men are in jail, or prison, on parole or probation. Nearly half of America's 1 million prisoners are black. The top heavy number of black men in jail reinforces the public view that they commit most of the major violent crimes in America. They don't. White males commit 54 percent of violent crimes in America, 60 percent of the urban hate crimes and the majority of serial and mass murders.

While they often get kid glove treatment from law enforcement, militant groups like MOVE get swiftly attacked and harshly prosecuted. Violence may come in black and white, but law enforcement does not treat both the same.

EARL OFARI HUTCHINSON is an author and columnist. Responses may be sent e-mail to him at: ehulchi344@aol.com

## To build America, 'Let us move boldly into this new world'

By Harvey Gantt  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Remarks prepared for delivery by Harvey Gantt last week at the Democratic national convention in Chicago.

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow Americans, I want to begin by telling you that in North Carolina I will defeat Jesse Helms in November.

I am an architect and I am a Democrat, which means that I am a builder. We don't believe in tearing people down. We believe in building the future.

These days, families are facing a whole new world of challenges. And we need to find whole new ways to help them reach the American Dream.

That's something I know a little about. My parents didn't have much money and precious little formal education. But they were rich in the values and dreams of America. They taught their five children that with hard work and perseverance, faith in God, and personal responsibility, anything was possible in this country. And I watched our family move from poor to middle class, from parents with little education to children with college degrees, from public housing to home ownership. As a child I held the 2-by-4s for my daddy as he built our first home with his own hands — determined to build our piece of the American Dream.

Where did they find that optimism? The home I was born in

## Tobacco attack and illegal drugs

GERALD O. JOHNSON

As I  
See It



The Clinton administration has asked the Food and Drug Administration to declare cigarettes a drug. If this request is granted, then cigarettes will be federally regulated. This can be construed as another attack on the tobacco industry. The tobacco industry has been under fire since it was discovered that cigarette smoking is hazardous to your health. But cigarettes are still legal products.

The government approach to attacking this industry has been educating the public about the dangers of smoking. This approach is being used to influence the public to stop smoking.

The strategy was to drive down the demand for the product and help drive the companies out of this line of business. The strategy is working. Cigarette consumption is down in the USA and it continues to fall each year. Because smoking has been made taboo, the government tactics are viewed by the public as acceptable.

But here is the problem. Cigarettes are still a legal product. Tobacco companies are still doing legitimate business. To what extent can we sanction the government spending tax dollars to drive a legitimate business out of business?

If the product is harmful and killing people, why not declare it illegal? Case closed. Sounds simple enough. But the tobacco industry has plenty of money to fight the government on this and could tie this up in courts for many years. Plus making tobacco illegal will

cause many states financial hardships, including North Carolina. Tobacco farmers will be hard hit, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of jobs that will be lost if the plants that produce tobacco products are shut down.

As much as we would like to take one side over another, this is a very complicated issue. We have to choose the public's physical health over its economic health. It's a situation where the government has to be a major player. I agree with the actions taken. By educating the public to the dangers of smoking, the government in effect addressed the physical health of the public. Since the educational approach is a slow, gradual process, it allows the tobacco industry to position itself in a way to absorb the impact of a decreasing demand of its products. Thus the economic impact is lessened.

If tobacco products come

under the jurisdiction of the FDA, then the government will be able to take more direct action in controlling these products. But this leads to a much more interesting question. If we take a legal product and classify it as a drug for more governmental control, why can't we take an illegal drug and make it legal for more government control?

I would think that the war on drugs could be made manageable if the illegal drugs were made legal. There are two aspects to illegal drugs: social and criminal. The social aspects are not significantly different from what we are seeing with the tobacco industry. The criminal aspect could be eliminated with the legalizing of these substances. Just something to think about.

Peace.

GERALD O. JOHNSON is publisher and president of The Charlotte Post.

## WEATHER SYMBOLS

ASSOCIATED WITH A HURRICANE WATCH...

**H** HURRICANE MAY POSSIBLY CARVE ITS WAY ALL THE WAY TO CHARLOTTE... AGAIN!

**L** LOW INVENTORY ON ALL PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED ITEMS...

**H** HIGH PROBABILITY THAT MILK, BREAD, AND BATTERIES WILL BE BOUGHT IN VOLUME...

**W** THE ENTIRE CITY WILL REMAIN STATIONARY IN FEAR OF 'FRAN'

**W** COLD DAY IN HELL WHEN PRICES ON CHAINSAWS STAY FAIR DURING THE WATCH...

**W** LITTLE CHANCE OF FOLKS BEING WARM & FRIENDLY WHILE GRABBING THE LAST ELECTRIC GENERATOR RIGHT BEFORE YOU...

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DANN HUNTER

## Mary McLeod Bethune's legacy

Bernice P. Jackson



Every now and then it is good to remind ourselves of the legacy left to us by our ancestors.

It is good to remember the endurance of our great grandmothers who lived in slavery and had their children snatched away from them. It is good to remember the patience of our great grandfathers who were farmers and knew how to survive at the whim of crops and weather. It is good to remember the courage of former slaves who were hungry to learn to read and did so sometimes as senior citizens. It is good to remember those who were beaten and died for the right to vote in this nation.

One of the richest legacies left

to African Americans is found in the words of Mary McLeod Bethune. If only we can recapture those words and that legacy, we may have a chance to survive as a people.

**I leave you love.** Love can stop the violence in our homes, in our communities, in our world. Self-love and the lack of it is at the heart of the problem for many African Americans.

**I leave you hope.** Cornel West says that too many young people have no love, no hope and no meaning in their lives. A hopeless person is a dangerous person and too many of our young people have no hope — no hope of a job, no hope of chance to survive, no hope even of life.

**I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another.** There are still African Americans who will not use black physicians, lawyers or contractors because they believe they will get inferior service. As African Americans are better educated and trained, we must

have confidence in each other's abilities, each other's skills, each other's gifts.

**I leave you a thirst for education.** Too many of our young people taunt those who want to learn and say they are trying to be white. They're trying to be black — to follow in the footsteps of our Egyptian ancestors who were some of the most learned people in history and in the footsteps of those slaves who endured beatings and death so that they might read. Without education, we are doomed as a people.

**I leave you respect for the use of power.** African Americans have been elected to Congress and mayoralties in unprecedented numbers. We are wealthier than we have ever been in this nation. With this new-found political and economic power comes increased responsibility in how we use it.

**I leave you faith.** It was faith in God which enabled our foremothers and forefathers to

endure the Middle Passage, slavery, lynchings and Jim Crow laws. Without that kind of faith, we cannot find real hope and real love. We must recapture that kind of faith if we are to survive.

**I leave you racial dignity.** Racial dignity is not just racial pride, but also the carrying high of one's head. Racial dignity comes with having faith, hope and love. It comes with loving education and having confidence in others of your race. It comes with using power with respect. It means standing tall because all is right with your relationship with God, with community, with family, with self.

It is good to revisit those words of Mary McLeod Bethune and to center our lives as a people around them once more. Thank you Mrs. Bethune. You left a rich legacy to us all.

BERNICE POWELL JACKSON is executive director of the Commission for Racial Equality in Cleveland, Ohio.

if you can get a job is not something to flaunt before those who work two or three jobs just to get by.

And we most definitely value our children and their education.

Last year, my opponent and the Republican Congress tried to cut the heart out of education. Thank God, President Clinton stopped them.

We have to get passionate about education again. It's time for new ideas...like a tax deduction to help middle class families pay for college tuition or job training.

We have to teach our children the basics again...the three R's of reading, writing and arithmetic...but also a fourth R. Respect. Respect for teachers,

for parents, for each other.

My parents had it right...the simple values of hard work, perseverance, faith, and education will always be the path to the American Dream.

So let us move forward boldly into this new world. Let us educate our children and train our workers better than anyone else.

But let us also understand that government cannot be a cure-all for all of our problems.

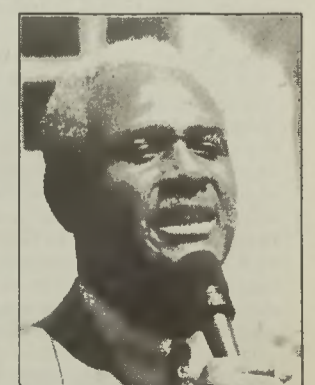
It never had been and it never will be.

Ordinary people, not unlike my momma and my daddy, will change America.

They always have.

And we Democrats should remember that they always will.

Thank you and may God bless



Gantt

you.  
HARVEY GANTT of Charlotte is a Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate.