

# Author interprets historic origins

Grassroot News, N.W.- Among the political apparatuses to emerge as a viable force in the 80s, is the Black United Front.

The Front has remained quite resilient as they mount offensives and defenses against social, political and economic inequalities. On an educational level, the Black United Front is elevating the Afro-American community's conscious at the grassroots level by sponsoring internationally known historians and educators.

Last Wednesday, at the Mallory Avenue Church, Dr. Ivan Van Sertima, author of *They Came Before Columbus*, shared his wisdom and knowledge with the Black community. Dr. Van Sertima is part of a unique group of pioneer historians which include Chekh Anta Diop, Asa Hillard and Chancellor Williams. They've devoted their talents and education to offsetting the absence and misconception of Africans and their descendants in European dominated history.

Dr. Van Sertima is currently a professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey. He holds degrees in African Studies, Linguistics and Anthropology, and is well-known in all three fields. He began his address by stating that traditional historians concentrated their time on one period of history and on one section of mankind in Africa -- the "primitive."

"Both Blacks and whites are enclosed in one chapter of history in what I call the Columbian Room. This room has become a prison in many ways. Most of our attitudes and conceptions about ourselves, and the way we are conceived by other people are just aimed at events of the last 500 years. That has made us think of ourselves in an extremely negative and limited way, because 500 years is a very small time when we consider that they are finding the first bones in Africa that dated back five million years. The difficulty of reconstructing the history of Africa

and these Americans, not only are created by great prejudices that existed yesterday and today, but that people have focused almost exclusively on primitive communities."

Having done research on African decedents' effect on the space program, Dr. Van Sertima went on to show that Dart Vader is not the only Black in space.

"The leading Technical Astronaut who entered the Space Shuttle with the two other Astronauts was Fredrick Gregory. Currently Gregory is designing the cockpit shutter, a program that will last into 1990.

Gregory completely revolutionized the landing of the aircraft in this country and the world. There are also Black women in the Space Program, specifically speaking, Dr. Pat Cowens. Dr. Cowens has devised a method akin to Yoga, that allows Astronauts to exercise without moving from their seats. In space, Astronauts must perform some form of exercise because there is no weight pull as on earth, and as a result, will cause fluids to collect in the body. This just proves that there's a vast amount of knowledge even in our own time that we have no knowledge of."

During his presentation, Dr. Sertima linked people of color to their traditional homeland. "Even though we can no longer return to Africa, Africa is our ancestral home. It becomes important because we have our roots in African and people judge us by saying who are you? In spite of the problems of modern Africa, most of what we hear on television about Africa is the begging bowls, thus, we have no idea of the potential of Africa or ourselves. This is why biological theories of racial difference can arise."

He goes on to discuss his book and the long-term effects on history. "There will be great fights over it,



Dr. Ivan Van Sertima shows ancient African art. (Photo: Richard Brown)

and many parts will be contested for a long time. I feel that now people will no longer look at primitives. More and more Blacks will move away from the images that was built up. This body of evidence is growing everyday. If these discoveries were made in other parts of the world there would be no surprise. But there's always a sense of surprise because it involves Africans who always support to do nothing. This recovery of history is important.

"The Jews became powerful because they made their history sacred. They remembered their history and people who remember their history become as powerful as the history they enshrine. People

who forget their history will lose themselves. It's critical to know history. You did not come from slavery, although that's but a chapter of history. Our roots lie in larger things, in greater things, in things that go back to the very heart of the world. A resurrection of consciousness is at hand. People of Africa decedents can now recover something that was lost."

In this recovery, a new awakening is expected from Afro-Americans; particularly the young who will find something more than what they now have. No longer will they wander aimlessly, because a correct interpretation of our people is all that is needed to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

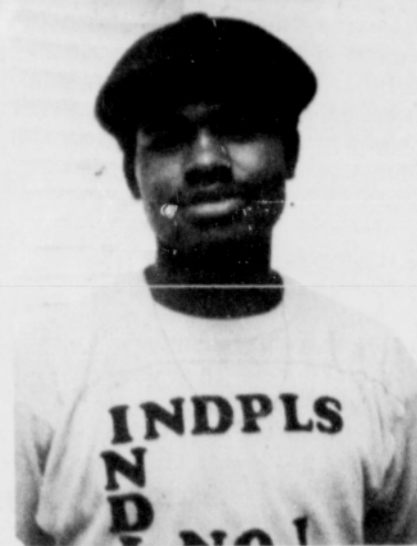
# Flemming directs activities

Earle Flemming has been appointed Activity Director of the Salvation Army Moore Street Center.

Flemming comes to the Center through the Field Experience Program of George Fox College, where he is majoring in social services.

Flemming will set up programs and tournaments for youth and adults. Sports programs which he plans to initiate include basketball, softball and football. Center activities will include ping-pong and pool tournaments as well as swimming meets.

Flemming, who was born in Canton, Mississippi, has been active in varsity basketball and baseball at George Fox College.



EARLE FLEMMING



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# Cell Talk

By Asmar Abdul Seifullah

Since the inception of the United States Criminal Justice System, one slogan stands out above all else; "innocence before guilt." The righteousness of the slogan has been the banner of democracy promised within the United States criminal justice system. Innocence before guilt signifies the equality of men under the law. It is a guarantee against racial discrimination and bigotry within the system of law. It promises every man a day in court, Counsel for defense, due process and the right to face one accuser. Also entwined in this mesh of legal safeguards is the jury system which guarantees a fair and impartial jury of peers.

As we closely examine the criminal justice system we find that it has one very apparent weakness and that is that it does not take into account the inherent prejudices of our society. History has documented the incidences of racism in the criminal justice system... "remember the Scottsboro Boys, Sacco and Vanzetti." The release of four Miami police officers responsible for the death of Arthur McDuffie is indicative of the brand of justice meted out under the jury system. It is all too clear that the distribution of justice in America has a tendency to favor the majority stock holders, who in this case happens to be white people.

It is not realistic for us to believe that white juries will render just verdicts to Black defendants. They are too wrapped up in their personal prejudices to judge fairly. The instant they see a Black face in the courtroom they assume that he is guilty or he wouldn't be charged with the crime. They refuse to accept the testimony of Black witnesses over white witnesses who display racial preference in terms of truth. Court appointed lawyers rarely zealously defend Black clients.

Due process is often circumvented because most Black defendants are ignorant to the law. The state's objective is to try a case as quickly and inexpensively as possible. Expedience at the expense of the defendant is not justice, it is racism. Once we come to realize that white courtrooms are synonymous to white supremacy and the perpetuation of white norms and values -- we can

then attack and expose the system for what it is.

The application and implementation of justice is designed to protect the rich and suppress the poor. Never has there been such a blatant display of economic, political and social discrimination as exist in the United States criminal justice system. The Patty Hearst scenario is just one of many insults reaped upon poor people by the criminal justice system. It was always clear in the minds of Black people that Ms. Rich America would never receive the full measure of what should have been strict justice. Compare the Hearst case with that of Joan Little and you will have a small idea of the type of justice America has to offer Black people.

It is a chilling experience for a Black man to stand before the bench of justice -- the gavel, the black robe -- and understand that the next stop is the hanging tree. Once you have had the unfortunate experience of spending time in one of America's prisons, you understand that there aren't any lengths the system won't go to ensure the continuance of white supremacy. The most disturbing fact of all is that most Black people -- those who have been lucky at not falling into the vindictiveness of the criminal justice system actually believe themselves exempt from the atrocious treatment reaped upon less fortunate Blacks. They continue to live their lives in rat infested ghettos, content, passive and blind to coming destruction of their debased existence.

"United we stand, divided we fall." Never has it been clearer that we must come together in opposing all forms of racism. The idea we must bear in mind is that the system is inherently racist and that it will not give us our freedom, we must take it! We must stand up and roar like a mighty black thunder, fling our lightning bolts at the object of our oppression. The systematic racism perpetuated against Black people comes in many forms... this article is one of them. The main point is that we must recognize our oppression in whatever form it comes. Don't exclude my oppression in your struggle simply because you can't feel my pain or

because you have been brainwashed into believing that I am criminal, when it is the system that is criminal.

May Allah guide us to the light of

understanding. May he bind us together into a united front against the continuance of racism in all forms.



**TEEN HOSTESSES** - Welcoming guests to the annual 4-H International Culture Fair Saturday evening, from 5 to 9 P.M., at Matt Dishman Center, will be Teen Leaders (Left to Right) Kim Kimmons, Royce Hardy and Lisa McConnell. Mrs. Betty Hardy is coordinator of the colorful event, and invites the public to join in the festivities.

## 4-H holds culture fair

Over 200 youngsters and adults will share the stage Saturday, April 25, at Matt Dishman Center when the Urban 4-H staff and leaders present the fourth annual 4-H International Culture Fair.

The program will open with a performance of Cinderella by the New Rose Theater, under the direction of Claudia Johnston. Doors will be open at 5 p.m., with food tasting and exhibit presentations following the opening performance, and continuing throughout the evening. The 4-H pledge and flag salute will be followed by songs by a 100 voice youth chorus, putting the program theme to music, "It's a Small World, After All."

Also to be presented are the

Chinese Benevolent Lion Dance, songs by the Sons of Norway, Laotian Dancers, Woodlawn School Dancers, Portland Indian Tribal Club, African Dancers, Sabin Super Strutters, King Acrobats, Youth Band and Al Harris with African and Caribbean Music.

The fair will continue to 9 p.m., and is open to the public admission free. A special invitation is extended to the Northeast community to take part, announces Ira d. Mumford, extension agent. "It is hoped that our program will again this year promote better understanding among the many ethnic groups of the community and foster friendship between us all."

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