



Along the Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

Dr. Manning Marable is professor of sociology and political science at Purdue University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

Jobless and Homeless

There is an illusion of general prosperity in this country, a myth which blames the victims of poverty. If you can't find a job, the Reaganites say, it's probably your own fault. If you're thrown out of your home and into the streets, you obviously lacked self initiative and the Protestant Work Ethic. The System "works," and if you don't work, that's too bad.

Despite four years of economic "recovery", there are 33.1 million Americans who are below the Federal government's poverty line. Nine million black Americans and 5.2 million Hispanics are poor. Last year, the median family income for whites was \$29,100. However, for black families the median family income was only \$16,800. In real dollars—that is, when reduced by inflation—the median income of all families has risen only 1.5 percent since 1970. Sixteen years ago, overall unemployment was 4.5 percent for whites and 8.2 percent for blacks. Today, jobless rates still exceed 6.5 percent for whites and 14 percent for blacks.

Chronic unemployment cannot be explained by rhetorical attacks on the American people's willingness to work. Recent census bureau research shows, first, that since 1970 fewer jobs are being created which require less than a high school education. In New York City, for instance, employment in industries where worker education was less than a high school level fell from 1.5 million jobs in 1970 to only 950,000 jobs by 1984. In Philadelphia during the same period, jobs for people with less than a high school degree declined by 172,000,

whereas positions requiring college training grew by 39,000. Second, almost all of the newly created "entry-level" jobs are being started by firms in the white suburbs, not in the innercities. From 1974 to 1984, for example, about one million new jobs were created in the "food and drink" sector, but nearly all of these positions are located in suburban areas. Even without the cutbacks in public transportation, it has become increasingly difficult for

many low income people to get to these new jobs.

The Reagan administration is aware of these statistics, but it has failed miserably to come up with any plan to lower urban joblessness. Enterprise zones in ghetto areas, with tax abatements for corporations, would do little to reduce black and Hispanic unemployment. A more effective plan would be to divert billions from the swollen Pentagon budget into a massive job training and placement project. But the Reaganites would rather let America's central cities fester and rot than spend one penny to assist an unemployed black woman or man.

For years, the Reagan administration has denied the pervasiveness of homelessness for several million women, men and children. In New York City alone, between 40,000 to 80,000 people lack shelter, and at least one million more live in decrepit, substandard dwellings.

But the homeless people are fighting back. In 1984, black community activist Chris Sproval started a Philadelphia shelter, the "Committee for Dignity and Fairness for the Homeless." Although designed to house 40 persons, on some cold evenings over 100 people found shelter in Sproval's building. The next year, Sproval and others established the National Union of the Homeless (NUH). In barely twelve months, NUH has started local groups in Boston, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Chicago, New Orleans and Los Angeles. Several labor unions have provided material support to the NUH; and as the numbers of unemployed and discouraged workers increase, the need for the NUH's activities will also grow.

NUH organizer Ronald Darnaby states: "Shelters are the poor houses of the twentieth century. What we need, instead, is low-cost housing, jobs, health care, education and job training." Whether homeless or not, these priorities also provide an agenda for all of us. So long as our tax dollars are wasted on "Star Wars" and nuclear missiles, our nation will continue to have millions of jobless and homeless people.

very little cost.

Nutrition is an extremely important component to good winter health. There are a number of dietary relationships with a sound immune system. There are habits and foods which weaken our resistance, and likewise foods and nutrients that help strengthen our resistance to infection.

Some of the things to avoid include high sugar intake, excessive coffee and/or black tea, smoking, and, for acute illnesses, high fat and dairy products seem to increase congestion and decrease blood flow to tissues (therein decreasing white blood cell delivery to areas of inflammation).

Some of the things to include in a winter dietary program include: good sources of Vitamin C and A. A is found in green leafy vegetables, carrots and yellow squashes. Vitamin C is highest in the pepper family and fresh fruits. Since winter is a less favorable season for these foods, it may be good to supplement these vitamins. The B vitamins, zinc, magnesium and selenium are also necessary for a healthy immune system. The levels of supplementation that I recommend are:

Vitamin C: Adults: 2-4,000 mg per day

Children: 1-2,000 mg per day

B-complex: Should be high in pantothenic acid and provide 25 mg per day of other B's (B-6 and B-12 are in micrograms (mcg's))

Vitamin A: Adults: 25,000 I.U.'s

Children: 15,000 I.U.'s

Beta-carotene is my favored form and dosage can safely be doubled in this form.

Minerals: Zinc: 10-15 mg. Selenium: 5-20 mcg. Magnesium: 100-200 mg (should be taken with calcium: 200-400 mg.)

In addition to the above general supplementation, there should be a conscious effort to maintain a good level of fluid intake. With the colder weather, most of us are less thirsty, and adequate fluid intake can compromise our eliminatory processes. Herbal teas, diluted fruit juices, vegetable juices and water are the preferred forms of fluids (4 to 6 glasses per day).

These are habits to assist us in not becoming ill this winter. I will discuss what we might do for acute illness in a future article.

Letters to the Editor

"From A Black Cultural Perspective"

From the earliest time (before 5500 B.C.) Africans/Blacks believed in the existence of one Supreme God who was nameless, incomprehensible and eternal. The Africans believed he was a self-existent (self-created) God who had made the universe and all things in it. They believed He had created the heaven and the earth and had fashioned man and endowed him with an immortal soul. They believed that the One and Only Almighty God knows those who serve Him, and protect those who follow Him. The One and Only Almighty God was nameless; but the Blacks of antiquity used many names to refer to Him. One of these names was Tem. (Other names used to refer to the Almighty One were Khepera, Amon, Ra, Ptah, Aten, Temu, Atmu, etc.) The Blacks believed there was a time when Tem existed by Himself, and that it was He who, by a series of efforts of His mind, created the heavens and the earth and lesser "gods" and men and every creature that has life. The first act after the creation of heaven and earth was the sending forth of the Sun, or the creation of Light ("and God said, let there be Light...")

Our Ancient Forefathers were always trying to figure out the puzzle of creation. According to one story, Khepera (another name for Tem, after sending forth the Sun, created other gods. These Gods proceeded from His body. Khepera first created Shu, the goddess of water and moisture. Shu and Tefnut were then united, and their offspring were Osiris (god of resurrection), Horus (the Sun god, Set (god of darkness, Isis (Wife of Osiris and Mother of the gods) and Nebt-het (goddess of Nature). We can see that the gods Khepera created were in fact the basic elements

of life, and that the natural laws prevail or function as a result of the interaction of the basic elements. Thus, the basic elements themselves are the "gods", and they are called such names as Shu (the god of air and dryness. In fact, air is the "god"). Tefnut, Keb, etc. Our ancestors knew what was important in life, and their religious "gods" reflected this. There are no things more important or valuable than air, water, etc. Additionally, Our Ancestors knew that when the gods interacted, other "gods" were produced.

After creating these gods, Khepera made the moon and assigned it a place in the universe. Then Khepera created man, who sprang not from the earth but directly from the body of Khepera Himself. Khepera then created creeping things. Men, women and all other living things which were made by Khepera then reproduced their species, each in its own way, and the earth became filled with their descendants.

Ancient Black People admitted the existence of a great Almighty God (Tem) who created the universe and all in it, but they thought He was too great and too remote to concern Himself with the affairs of man, and that He had therefore committed the management of this World to the series of gods that were just mentioned. African People thought it was necessary for people to worship or gratify these gods. Because these gods were all around, African People felt they could approach these "gods" directly, and a series of myths evolved which involved many of the gods and goddesses Africans worshipped. Our basic Black religion recognized the completeness of man/people. Accordingly, the whole person consisted of a physical body (the Khat), a

spiritual body (the Sahu), a heart (Ab), a double (Ka), a heart-soul (?), and a name. All of these parts were bound together inseparably, and the welfare of any single part concerned the welfare of all of the parts. Thus, for the well-being of the spiritual parts, it was necessary to preserve the physical parts from decay. This explains why such care was taken in embalming the Body of Jesus.

African religion had no concept of sin, thus there is no nonsense about Adam, Eve and the snake. What Black People believed in was opposites which co-exist, and their religion reflected this. They did not feel that people were either good or bad, but both. Therefore, they did not have to strive religiously for salvation to negate their sins because there were nothing to be saved from. What African religion stressed was the relationship of people to others while they lived, and a statement of those relations was suggested in the 42 Negative Confessions which were made by the dead as they sought immortality and approval of the gods. (From these 42 Negative Confessions Moses drew the so-called Ten Commandments more than 4000 years later. To Our Ancestors, religion was a way of life. All other institutions and all other base (including politics, economics, education and the social order in general). It led Our Ancestors to constantly seek knowledge of themselves and life in general, and nurtured overwhelmingly civilized traits in them that rendered them incapable of adequately dealing with later, barbaric creatures, cowardly carnivorous beasts in human form who saw religion as no more than a tool of their political aims and desires.

Dr. Jamil Cheroovee



Healthwatch

by Steven Bailey, N.D.

As the rains come, so too comes the season of colds, flus and bronchitis. This season is so predictable in the Willamette Valley that the local Indians called this the "Valley of the Wet Sickness". Yearly migration out of the valley was the practice of these native residents.

While most of us can't migrate to the hills nor visit the sunny south, we can change our lives some to minimize the chances of contracting these seasonal illnesses.

There are a number of reasons why we are more susceptible to illness in the cold, wet times of the year. We are more inclined to get soaked in the outdoors and to experience dramatic changes in our body temperature. We are also more likely to have a warm, moist environment indoors, which is a more comfortable breeding ground for micro-organisms. We are placed in more intimate or proximal relationship with our day-to-day contacts and, thus, enhance the spread of illnesses. Our diets change from one which is high in fresh fruits and vegetables to one which is generally heavier in beans, meats, dairy and breads. We have seasonal binges in the areas of simple sugars. And, finally, we have the depressions of the short, wet days of winter. While these are by no means the sole causes of our higher rates of colds and flus, they are

relevant to over-all increases that we experience.

We can not change the weather, but we can modify our own environments to some degree. We can dress warmly and use rain-proof clothes as much as possible. We should try to minimize the extreme temperature changes. Maintaining a home temperature of 60 to 65 degrees is probably preferable to warmer indoor temperatures. If you shower or bathe right before you go out into the cold, it is good to have a cool rinse at the end of the shower. 15 to 30 seconds of cool rinse will constrict the capillaries and conserve body heat. Cool is sufficient (you don't need to take icy cold rinses).

Exercise is an important component to good health from a wide variety of areas. Not only do we help our cardiovascular systems, but our immune system also benefits from moderate aerobic exercise. The winter is a hard time to jog or perform other outdoor programs, but there are a number of other indoor activities that you can do. Calisthenics, mini-tramps, and other aerobic indoor programs can provide adequate work in 30 minutes. In North-Northeast Portland we have the Salvation Army facility on Killingsworth that has one of the lowest membership rates in Portland. Here you can swim, lift weights, take dancercise classes, etc., for

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