

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## EDITORIAL

### Racism in Iowa

In the February 9, 1988, issue of the Des Moines Register, the headline read: "Clive police urge residents: Report sightings of Blacks." A few days later another headline appeared: "Critics urge Clive's racist chief resign".

The headlines were in reference to a letter from the Clive, Iowa, Police Department "asking residents to report Black men in their neighborhoods at night" According to the Register, "the fliers were distributed to block captains in Neighborhood Watch areas of the Des Moines suburb. The fliers described a burglary during which the homeowners woke up to find an intruder in their bedroom. The suspect was described as a large Black man." The flier also said, "If you see a black male in your neighborhood at night, please call the Clive police immediately so that we can try to find out who the individual is."

To date, no evidence has been found to indicate whether or not the man in question was African-American.

Larry Carter, President of the Des Moines branch of the NAACP said the statement was terrible. "The police department has other resources available to them to track down a suspect. There must be a better way of getting this information out without incriminating every black male who may wish to go to Clive. We should be able to go freely wherever we choose without being subjected to police questioning simply because we are large or we are black," he said.

Clive Police Chief Dean Dymond agreed with Mr. Carter, saying the statement would be retracted in the next publication to block captains.

Mr. Dymond's agreeable stance has not dampened the anger of some Des Moines residents. The Des Moines Human Rights Commission has demanded Chief Dymond's resignation. Mark Lambert, assistant director of the Iowa Civil Liberties Union, said the statement was "incredibly offensive." "The fact that someone is black is not enough of a reason to have them checked out by police or suspect them of being criminal. Sometimes police in mostly-white neighborhoods decide that if a crime is committed by a black, anyone like that seen in the area is automatically a suspect," Lambert noted.

In a defensive move, Chief Dymond said, "Nothing racial was meant by it. We put out a publication every two months and we will make a special note to retract that statement."

However, Mary Rhem-Brewer, a representative of the Black United Front, said, "No discussion, no compromise. The issue is, does a black man have the right to be in Clive... This is opening the door for another Howard Beach right here." Commissioner Carlos Jayne said the fliers represent a racist attitude. "It was a policy that was surreptitiously instituted and not just an off-the-cuff remark. His mistake wasn't in saying it. It was in having it written down."

According to the 1980 census, Clive was listed as having a population of 5,900 people with about 40 African-Americans.

The incidents in Clive and Howard Beach were bound to happen. Their roots go back to the days of what is now known as "White flight."

"White flight" refers to the attitudes of whites who moved out of the cities rather than live as neighbors with non-whites, African-Americans in particular. Intended or not, the impression given was, "We prefer not to live near or in your neighborhoods." Ironically, these were the same neighborhoods they called home a few years before. When they took flight, so did their money and their businesses. In fact, many businesses followed them to the suburbs, leaving the inner city depleted of important economic resources."

Now, in many of these suburbs, African-Americans are being told, in no uncertain terms, "You are not welcome here. We don't want to see your black face around here." That was the message of Howard Beach. That is the message coming from the suburbs of Clive in Des Moines. That was the message of Forsyth County. It's a message we can expect to continue to hear.

See "Racism in Iowa" — Page 4

## Civil Rights Journal

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

### THE RIGHT TO VOTE: USE IT OR LOSE IT!

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

The date was February 18, 1965. The place was Marion, Alabama. What happened there that night was to change the course of history dramatically. It would also have untold affect on the right of African Americans to vote in the South and throughout the country.

On that night in February, voting rights activists, including Albert Turner from Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), had organized a march. The march would show, again, that African Americans would not be intimidated by the unbridled violence inflicted on them by Alabama officials every time they tried to register to vote.

Soon after the march began, Alabama State Troopers rioted. They began beating and clubbing the demonstrators, among them an 84-year-old marcher named Cager Lee. Lee's grandson, Jimmie Lee Jackson, immediately came to his grandfather's aid and carried him into a nearby Black-owned restaurant. The troopers followed, still clubbing everyone in sight, including Jimmie Lee's mother. When he tried to protect her, the troopers promptly shot the young man point blank in his side. Then, propping him up, they shot him twice again. Jimmie Lee Jackson died seven days later.

This was the death which prompted voting rights organizers to initiate the Selma to Montgomery March to protest his murder. On March 6, 1965, the march was set to begin on the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma. As Movement organizers from SCLC and SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), along with local residents, began to move forward, Alabama State Troopers viciously attacked the unarmed group.

Only this time it was different — the brutality was televised. Television viewers throughout the nation watched, horrified, as the evening news showed troopers relentlessly clubbing the fallen, many of them women. Movement organizers had endured countless acts of violence over the years during the voting rights struggle. However, this one act of senseless brutality, fed to

America with its TV dinners, meant that the violence could no longer be ignored.

As a result of intense public pressure, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act which was signed into law by President Johnson on August 6, 1965. The Act cleared the way for the registration of hundreds of thousands of African American voters throughout the South.

This year a national committee has been formed, based in Selma, Alabama, which plans to commemorate the historic voting rights struggle there. The main celebration takes place on March 6th in Selma. The Annual National Celebration of the Right to Vote was initiated by Atty. Rose Sanders, the dynamic activist attorney from Selma. She and her husband, State Sen. Hank Sanders, have long been in the forefront of voter mobilization and education in the Alabama Black Belt. She speaks of the importance of beginning this yearly celebration throughout the country, saying, "Rather than every 20 years, we need to celebrate our voting rights victories every year — in our classrooms, our churches and our homes. We must keep uppermost in the minds of the community, and particularly our children, how many of us died for this precious right. And if we don't use it, we'll surely lose it."

Albert Turner, still a tireless civil rights worker in Perry County, Alabama, echoes these words in an inspiring television documentary, produced by WNYC-TV in New York City. Entitled, "Somebody Marched for Me," the film is about the continuing voting rights struggles in the Alabama Black Belt. Mr. Turner is shown pointing to the bullet-riddled gravestone of Jimmie Lee Jackson. He explains, "White racists still shoot at Jimmie Lee's grave. They keep trying to kill what he stood for but it won't die. And every time we vote, he lives again through us."

As the Presidential primaries and elections draw near, we would all do well to remember his words, and to remember, too, the blood which was shed throughout the years for the right to vote.

The Civil Rights Journal, written by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., is a publication of the United Church of Christ.



## Along the Color Line

Manning Marable

### "FALSE PROPHET: JOE CLARK"

Joe Clark, the crusading Black principal of Eastside High School, Patterson, New Jersey, has received a great amount of media attention and public praise in recent weeks. And when viewed superficially, it's easy to praise Clark as a valiant educator who's been unjustly maligned by liberals of various stripes.

Clark was named principal of one of New Jersey's worst public schools about six years ago. Eastside was overrun by drugs and violence, and Clark was determined to turn things around. Cultivating a style which was simultaneously provocative, confrontational and charismatic, he patrolled school corridors with a bullhorn, shouting out orders. Clark promoted the Protestant work ethic, and praised young women who were virgins for upholding morality. The principal criticized families who relied upon welfare as lazy, and condemned difficult students as "leeches, miscreants and hoodlums." Although the principal had no legal authority to expel students without the approval of the Patterson School Board, Clark purged 300 of Eastside's 3,000 students in 1982, and in late 1987 he banned an additional 60 students.

Clark's preemptive actions stirred a hornet's nest of public criticism. Educators condemned Clark's actions as counterproductive, noting that under New Jersey law, all indi-

viduals are entitled to a public education until age 21. Patterson's School Board condemned Clark, and ordered him to reinstate the 60 pupils who had recently been expelled. But a groundswell of support for Clark occurred, initially from many working class and poor Black residents of Patterson who favored a hardline approach on educational issues. Supporters noted that scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test for Eastside students have risen since Clark's tenure, as well as school marks on the statewide proficiency test for Math and English composition.

Clark presents himself as a toughminded educator, an urban prophet struggling for quality standards in the public schools. Regrettably, some Blacks have cheered his bombastic and bullying tactics, thinking that bullhorns and expulsions are a substitute for real education. But Clark is a false prophet, a shallow and demagogic administrator who prefers to exert authority at the expense of the broader goal of enriching the educational experience for innercity Black and Hispanic youth. The Reaganites see in Clark a cheap but sensational way to win over a fragment of the ghetto's Black working class, frustrated by poor schools and high crime rates. But Clark's strategy is nothing but a dead end.

Dr. Manning Marable is Chairperson of the Black Studies Department, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

### Identity and Survival

by J.M. Gates, MBA

Generational connections in the positives of keep-on-keeping-on appear in Black film connections, paper fans, posters, pageants, benevolent societies and the on-going positive traditions that bolster an inspired willingness to risk all for improvement of self and the next generation. Cultural identity and survival were the what of it all. Certain letters in the

George P. Johnson Film Collection at University of California (Los Angeles) tell how Afro-Americans sought money from the United States government to make films for Black troops who would go to Europe in the First World War. Even before that, stock certificates of Black film investment evidence the serious thinking and planning.

## Letters to the Editor

### Arthur Schomburg's Dream Fulfilled

Editor:

I'm inclined to believe we must judge beginnings by endings, not endings by beginnings. It matters not how the development of the eye took place nor how imperfect was the first sense of sight, if the eye now gives us correct information of external objects. So it matters not how the intuitions of right and of God originated, if they now give us knowledge of objective truth. We must take for granted that evolution of ideas is not from sense to nonsense. We can understand the amoeba and the polyp only by a light reflected from the study of man.

We must eliminate an inferiority complex. We are not so uncultured. We must learn to converse with educated, cultured people without trembling with fear. We must motivate our youngsters of potentially great achievement. They have lived in a world of deprivation, blocked against anything educational. We must fight against the poverty-nurtured attitude of people. You really learn the difference between good and bad when you live in an area where you have a choice. It's time to remember, what happens to us tomorrow depends on what we teach our children today. History shows that the strength of today has come out of the immigrant group of yesterday. We must lift our people to their

potential.

Harlem in the 1920's, a period that was known as the Harlem Renaissance, swung to the music of Duke Ellington and Fletcher Henderson. Caucasoid New Yorkers flocked to Harlem nightclubs to be hypnotized by the voice of Ethel Waters and the dancing feet of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. But it was in amazed fascination that the downtowners beheld the erudition of the scholar W.E.B. DuBois and the elegant lyrical prose of Jean Toomer. These literary voices contradicted all of the stereotypes that dominated their perceptions of Black people. Stated Sybil Gowly, in the now-defunct Negro World Statesman, "Everyone wanted to write a book about Negroes and everyone wanted to read what everyone had written about them."

During this period, Ernestine Rose was head librarian at the branch of the New York Public Library on 135th Street between Lenox Avenue and what is now Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard, then Seventh Avenue. Curious and eager to learn about Black people's origins and activities past and present, Harlemites and others were emptying the library's shelves of books like McKay's novel, "Home to Harlem", and James Weldon Johnson's anthology, "The Book of American Negro Poetry." As the people

came in, Ernestine Rose got busier and became increasingly concerned — the city's budget for replacement of volumes having been depleted — about preserving and expanding the library's stock.

By now, Arthur A. Schomburg had been living in New York City for more than 30 years, having emigrated there from his native Puerto Rico. As a child in San Juan, Schomburg had had burned into his consciousness the words of his mulatto teacher, "Negroes," she had told her pupils, "have made no history." Incredulous in light of the capable Black businessmen, artists, ministers and teachers he knew whose ancestors, he surmised, could not have been stupid, the little boy had grown up to be the man who would travel halfway around the world gathering evidence to expose his teacher's lie. Schomburg's reputation as a collector of books about Africans and African-Americans was known to librarian Rose and, through friends, she contacted him. If he was so successful in finding books for himself in the bookstores of Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe and the United States, he might be able to help the library obtain books, too.

In 1929, Schomburg's private collection was deemed to be of such importance that, at the urging of the officials of the Na-

tional Urgan League, the Carnegie Corporation bought it for \$10,000 and donated it to the Division of Negro Literature, History and Prints, at the 135th Street Library. Since then, the Schomburg Collection has grown tremendously. Jean Hutson, until recently the curator for the Center for the last 35 years, says, "The library is growing steadily. The Schomburg Collection, always a part of the Circulation Department of the New York Public Library, became, in 1972, one of the four main components of the New York Public Library's Research Libraries. Its name was also changed in 1972 to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture."

Alex Haley did a great deal of research for his best-selling book "Roots" at the Schomburg Center. Psychologist/educator Dr. Kenneth Clark supports the Center. It was at the Schomburg Center that Kwame Nkrumah first read about African history. In Ghana during his childhood, the English colonizers only allowed the history of England to be taught. When I last spoke at Hunter College Black Students Union, I notice Arthur Schomburg's dream fulfilled, the dream that young Black people in the generations succeeding his own would know nothing of the lie his teacher had told him — that "the Negro has made no history."

Dr. Jamil Cherovee

## PORTLAND OBSERVER

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION  
Established in 1970

Alfred L. Henderson/Publisher Leon L. Harris/Gen. Mgr./Controller

### PORTLAND OBSERVER

is published weekly by Exie Publishing Company, Inc.

5011 N.E. 26th Ave.  
Portland, Oregon 97211  
P.O. Box 3137  
Portland, Oregon 97208  
Phone Number: (503) 288-0033

Richard J. Brown

Editor

Gary Ann Garnett  
Business Manager

Nyewusi Askari  
Writer

Mattie Ann Callier-Spears  
Religion Editor

Fred Hembry  
Sports

Joyce Washington  
Sales Representative

Lonnie Wells  
Distribution

Richard J. Brown  
Photographer

Leslie V. White  
Art Director

Arnold Pitre  
Sales Representative

Rebecca Robinson  
Typesetter/Production

Deadlines for all submitted materials:  
Articles: Monday, 5 p.m.; Ads: Tuesday, 5 p.m.

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area.

The PORTLAND OBSERVER — Oregon's oldest African American Publication — is a member of The National Newspaper Association — Founded in 1895. The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers Association, New York.



To start the Portland Observer coming every week  
 \$15.00 for one year  \$25.00 for two years

## PORTLAND OBSERVER

Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_