

EDITORIAL / OPINION

EDITORIAL

Run Jesse Run!

Whether the Democrats like it or not, Presidential candidate Jesse Jackson is a force to be reckoned with. Running neck-and-neck with Michael Dukakis, Rev. Jackson is symbolic of African-American participation in politics across America. Make no mistake about it, African-Americans are reshaping politics in America. Thirteen of America's big cities have African-American mayors. Four of America's six largest cities are headed by African-American mayors. The ranks of African-Americans in Congress has doubled and now we have the Rev. Jesse Jackson running for the Office of President of the United States.

During Rev. Jackson's bid for the Presidency in 1984, the Democrats treated him like a stranger, and, when it appeared that Rev. Jackson was going to gain more support than anticipated, the Democrats created obscure rules that made it impossible for him to win a substantial number of important, needed delegates. But how things have changed.

Democrats are now asking themselves "What are we going to do about Jesse Jackson?" They should be asking "What can we do to support Rev. Jesse Jackson?" That Rev. Jackson is showing surprising political strength is no fluke.

First, the past and current crop of Democratic Presidential hopefuls, with the exception of Rev. Jackson, are not speaking to the needs of the majority of the American people. Many of these candidates lack a clear cut program and most bore the public to death trying to explain just what their programs are.

Second, the Democrats are attempting to stop Rev. Jackson's momentum by saying he isn't electable. Other foes are saying he lacks political experience and still others are saying he doesn't have a clear cut foreign policy. Good sounding rhetoric for those who need to hear such mumbblings. However, when we reread the records of Democratic and Republican Presidents over the past 25 years, it causes us to wonder just how valid is political experience when it comes to running the country. Take President Reagan for example. His experience as Governor of California didn't prepare him to be an effective President. His administration has been torn apart by greed, in-fighting, resignations of top officials, convictions, and ineffective policies. We won't even talk about the morbid regime of former President Richard Nixon. And the list goes on and on.

Third, despite the mumbblings of the media and the dire predictions of so-called political analysts about the electability of Rev. Jackson, many Americans are beginning to listen to what he has to say. They have proven it by giving him their votes. Many white male politicians are discovering that a growing number of white voters are thinking for themselves. These white voters no longer support the politics of racism and they are giving their votes to the candidate they feel is the most qualified. To try and make voters believe that America is not ready to elect a Black man for President is to try to ignite the flames of racism. It is an appeal to white Americans to withhold their support based on racism — the color of Rev. Jackson's skin. However, many white Americans are no longer willing to allow the color of Rev. Jackson's skin determine whether or not they vote for him. They are tired of the same ol' soup warmed over. They are tired of having white male politicians tell them how to vote or who to vote for. They are also tired of ineffective white male leadership. Like most Americans, many white Americans are ready for a change and right now Jesse Jackson is their choice. They proved it in Michigan, they've proved it in other primaries and they will continue to prove it right on up to the Democratic Convention.

Rev. Jackson believes as we do: If he goes into the convention with the most delegates, then he should be the Democratic nominee for President. The big shots in the Democratic Party seem to forget that Rev. Jackson didn't go out and steal votes. He didn't play some sort of underhanded game in order to get where he is now. He has worked hard. He has reached out to millions of Americans of all colors. He has proven his worth, his dedication and his loyalty to the Democratic Party. Thus, he should be given the highest respect and honor of the party.

Finally, the Democrats should know by now that African-American men and women will continue to push for the Presidency of the United States. They should also realize that white Americans are not going to continue to support ineffective white male leadership.

The cry "Run Jesse Run" will continue. This decade it's Rev. Jackson. The next decade it will be another African-American and another and another until one day America will indeed witness the swearing in of its first African-American President. It is bound to happen.

Run Jesse Run!



Along the Color Line

Manning Marable

The Politics of Black Higher Education Part II of a Two Part Series

Twenty years ago, in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, thousands of outraged Black students protested white racism on their college campuses. They established new militant organizations called Black Student Unions, or BSUs. I was more than an observer in this political process. At Earlham College in Indiana, I was the Chairperson of our BSU in 1969. As we explored the factors behind racism at white colleges today, we should also examine the changing role and function of BSUs.

As originally conceived, the BSUs wanted to create a greater social and political awareness among African-American students, and a desire to confront and to challenge white administrators on matters of educational policy. They called for the creation of the Black Studies departments, Minority Student Programs, Cultural Centers, and other institutions. The BSUs advanced the cause of affirmative action by demanding the recruitment and appointment of Black faculty and administrators. The BSUs represented a vital link between the struggles being waged in urban streets and our communities with the politics of higher education which existed at white academic institutions.

The politicized character of the BSUs always depended upon two basic factors: the relative strength or weakness of the national and local Black protest movement at any given time, and the specific type of Black students which were being recruited by particular colleges in any year. As the struggle markedly declined in the mid-to-late 1970s, it became increasingly difficult to interest many Black students to be personally involved in protests, demonstrations or even community-oriented programs. Many colleges also ceased recruiting Black and Hispanic students from low-income neighborhoods and innercity areas, and deliberately focused their efforts on minority youth at private high schools or mid-to-upper income school districts. The Reagan Administration reinforced this strategic shift in student

recruitment by drastically cutting student loan and aid programs, which meant that low income Black families could no longer afford to accumulate modest amounts of money to send their sons and daughters to college. It should not be surprising, therefore, that many BSUs became more conservative in the 1980s. On some campuses, the BSU became the functional equivalent of a sorority or fraternity. They became heavily involved in social activities, and disengaged in political and academic institutions. At many schools, the BSU disappeared entirely; its records and archives were lost forever. And at other institutions, there was a renaissance of Black fraternities and sororities as the central agencies of student interest and collective activity.

In this environment of political retrenchment and reaction, in the twilight of the Civil Rights era, it was difficult for many Black Studies departments and programs to survive, much less develop and expand. Within BSUs, interest in maintaining student involvement and support for all Black academic programs declined.

In order to reverse the trend toward institutional racism in white higher education, Blacks must recognize the connection between political struggle, institution-building and educational change. Without strong Black student organizations, there is no viable constituency which can reinforce Black educators. Without strong and assertive Black academic and student supportive services institutions on white campuses, affirmative action programs are meaningless. It makes little sense to recruit Black students into white universities, only to see them drop out within months because of the absence of strong, supportive institutions within their campus. Black educational progress for Black youth depends fundamentally upon the political and academic awareness and self-organization.

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



Civil Rights Journal

Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

Easter in South Africa

Easter is the season of crucifixion and resurrection. It is the time in the Christian faith for spiritual rejuvenation when we celebrate the liberation and salvation of humankind through Jesus Christ. Nowhere in the world today is there a greater affront to the meaning of Easter than the racist apartheid regime of South Africa.

The oppressive government of P.W. Botha has embarked on its last, desperate attempt to remain in power. Not only have all of the anti-apartheid organizations in South Africa now been banned, but this brutal regime has also announced its intention to severely limit the activities of the church as a voice of protest against the continuing holocaust.

Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Rev. Dr. Allan Boesak, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, together with other church leaders in South Africa, have called for a massive, nationwide celebration of liberation on Easter Sunday this year. The government of South Africa intends to prevent the services.

The church is the last nonviolent voice that has not yet been extinguished by South Africa's repression. Bishop Tutu emphasizes, "Does the Government of South Africa really think it can dictate to the people of God in our quest for justice and freedom? We will not bow down and worship Botha. The idolatry and sin of apartheid must be ended now!" Rev. Boesak agreed, warning, "With these latest acts of repression against the church and the freedom movement, the Government of South Africa has

signed its own death warrant." As our sisters and brothers in South Africa continue to wage a valiant struggle for freedom, the glaring absence of sustained voices and actions on the part of America's church leaders becomes more obvious. Here in the United States, it is our prayer that during this Easter season church leaders and church members will resurrect their active solidarity with the struggle to bring new life and freedom to South Africa. On a broader scale, the governments of the United States, Great Britain and Israel, in particular, have a great deal for which to repent. They have maintained their unholily support of the evil of apartheid in South Africa and Namibia, which South Africa illegally occupies.

Rather than millions of people spending millions of dollars on new Easter outfits this year, it would be far better to help purchase medical supplies and outfits for the freedom fighters of the African National Congress and the South West African Peoples' Organization. The Ministers for Racial and Social Justice, an organization of African American clergy of the United Church of Christ, has established a special African Freedom Fighters Fund for this purpose.

One thing is certain: a victory for the sake of righteousness and justice will be won in South Africa. Our responsibility is to not let the joy of Easter be just a momentary celebration. We must let all of our lights so shine in struggle that God's justice will continue to unfold in South Africa and everywhere in the world where the evils of racism and oppression lurk.

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

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OPINION

by Dr. Jamil Cherovee

Blacks in Science

Astronomy isn't my cup of tea. However, the more one studies, the more one realizes how little one knows. While in Africa, I did a little research on Dogon of Mali: Master Astronomers. Far more remarkable than the megalithic observatory found in Kenya before Christ is the discovery of extremely complex knowledge of astronomy among people in West Africa known as the Dogon. These Black people live in a mountainous area of the Republic of Mali, about 200 miles from where the legendary University of Timbuctoo once lay. The astronomer-priest of the Dogon had for centuries, it seems, a very modern view of our solar system and of the universe — the rings of Saturn, the moons of Jupiter, and the spiral structure of the Milky Way galaxy in which our planet lies. They knew a billion worlds spiraled in space like the circulation of blood within the body of God. They knew that the moon was a barren world. They said it was "dry and dead," like dried blood. They knew also of the things far in advance of their time, intricate details about a star which no one can see except with the most powerful of telescopes.

I'm inclined to believe the Sirius Question has thrown the most recent light on the scien-

tific breakthrough of these Africans. The gross prejudices of Eurocentric scientists have been exposed. The so-called christian caucasoids simply would not accept that any African astronomer-priest could have developed a science of the heavens so advanced that it could yield knowledge which, until the 20th century, escaped European observation.

I was informed only a Black person was allowed to enter the inner sanctum of their most secret knowledge. Now I realize why there is a profound contempt of African scientific capabilities which still dominates world scholarship. Robert Temple, a member of the Royal Astronomical Society of Great Britain, in a highly acclaimed book, "The Sirius Mystery," speculates that space-beings from the Sirius Star system must have brought this marvelous knowledge down to the Africans. The arrogant racist claims: "Civilization, as we know it, was an importation from another star in the first place . . . the linked culture of Egypt and Sumer in the Mediterranean area simply came out of nowhere. Imagine that!"

The Russians have found crystal lenses — perfectly spherical and of great precision — from An-



cient Egypt during the African-dominated period. Galileo always insisted that the Ancients had telescopes.

Carl Sagan, superstar of the TV series "Cosmos", goes one step further. His solution to the mystery is some clever European traveller who appeared among the Dogon before the anthropologist came to study them. This scientifically literate European, proposes Sagan, exchanged his sophisticated knowledge of the stars in return for the savage simple lore. Sagan has not even stopped to consider that no scientifically literate European, even today, much less before 1931, can speak with the certainty of Dogon elders of the one-year orbit of Sirius B on its own axis. Nor has it occurred to him that this obsession with that star system expressed itself in ceremonies among the Dogon centuries ago, nor that the tradition they were supposed to have imbibed from an itinerate caucasoid genius

and regurgitated to the anthropologists like parrots never surfaced until after sixteen years of continuous probing.

Caucasians must stop pretending they have all the answers, when the sun still is a mystery — a ball of fire fueled by an unending supply of gas. They have no idea what goes on inside the sun. American scientists are as far away from reaching conclusions about the interior of the sun and its history as the Earth is from the sun. Caucasoid astronomers and physiologists still argue about the existence and properties of "neutrinos" which are produced in the core of the sun. I'm inclined to believe, if conclusive data could be found on the neutrinos, it would give science a peek into the creation of the Universe. Solar physics may have gotten a new lease on life from seismology. However, a major sun observation experiment was destroyed with the shuttle Challenger explosion in 1986.