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Anti-Defamation League Expresses Concern On New Report

The Anti-Defamation League has expressed concern with "what appears to be the pessimistic tone" of the new report "One-Third Of A Nation," which says the United States is moving backward in efforts to promote equal opportunity for minorities.

In identical letters (dated May 27) to former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, honorary co-chairmen of the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, which issued the report, the League said that while it "spotlights important and difficult problems faced by minorities" and while we "generally agree with the thrust of the panel's findings, ADL's monitoring of human relations and civil rights activities in the United States leads us to some different and more hopeful conclusions."

The letter, signed by ADL national chairman Burton S. Levinson and national director Abraham H. Foxman, said that "while the equity and civil rights gap remains, minorities have made progress (albeit not enough) in the important areas of jobs and housing. In the last year we have seen the development of community coalitions—involving media, public and private schools, community groups and corporate life—working together to diminish racial and religious prejudice."

The ADL officials also pointed out that local and state legislatures across the country have enacted statutes prohibiting acts of harassment and violence against racial and religious minorities. "Law enforcement agencies now have added tools to deal with the social and psychological manifestations of prejudice," they said.

Regarding education, ADL said it shares the Commission's "profound concern," noting that "poor student performance and high drop out rates are indicators of problems in our system at a time when an educated citizenry is most needed."

The letter went on to say that ADL "is a participant in the reform movement that is now sweeping the nation and revitalizing school systems everywhere" and assured the two former Presidents that the agency remains "resolute and positive" in its efforts toward "closing the gap, and insuring a healthy and strong democracy."

Technological Caper

How many readers saw the June 3rd article and picture in the Portland 'Oregonian', "OMSI Displays Pair of Gym Rats?" The traveling exhibit depicted a pure white rat as Larry Bird, and a predominately BLACK RAT as Dr. J (Jr.), no less. Though the scientific community has never been extolled for its 'sensitivity courses' at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

If they are interested in exhibits with ethnic significance, one would think that at their main site they would have a highly visible display of Black scientists and inventors. There are some available sources of information on the subject, if not at the Smithsonian (See my article here — [Perspectives]). In the meanwhile, the community, Black and white, is mounting increased displeasure at this cutie-cute 'technological' caper.

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"The Eyes and Ears of the Community"

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EDITORIAL / OPINION

An Editorial From A Student-At-Large

by Jim Lazakioues

In these days of political mudslinging. No institution has been spared. Even C.C.C. (Clackamas Community College). Faith Taylor as a president, has been recently cast into this arena of rumors and discrimination.

In the beginning, Faith had to break down the initial barrier of a Black women running for ASG (Associate Student Government) president in a predominately white student body. When she started, she only had 3 days in which to turn in 100 names, so her name would be included on the ballot for the ASG April 22-23 election.

Diligence and charisma — Faith's strongest traits, brought here from the dream of being president to the reality of winning the election. Then the trouble began. Rumors surfaced that Faith, bought her votes, and used unethical practices to be sure of a victory, even more disturbing was the fact that the administration of C.C.C. believed these mudslingers, and called a recall vote.

Faith, being totally disgruntled at this action considered all the factors being presented and decided on a strong stand on her right to run for office, with this resilience she with stood the barrier of jealousy and kept her title of president.

Faith, being a deeply religious person couldn't, because of conscience, think of being unfair.

The thought of being accused of acting unfairly, greatly disturbed her. A scholarship for track and other admirable accomplishments even put Faith, higher on a integrity scale, but this rarely discourages people trying to put people down because of their own prejudice and bigotted ideals.

In all, Faith Taylor (ASG president) has proved herself worthy of the position she holds and has the internal fortitude to get the job done.

"Remembering Our Fathers"

In our continuing efforts to provide the community with a viable outlet for information and community services, the Portland Observer will be offering our readership the means to commemorate our fathers.

This special feature will focus on individual achievements, expressions of affection and gratitude for the things these special men have brought to each of us.

To participate in this special tribute, just call the sales staff at the Portland Observer at 288-1733.

Perspectives



by Professor McKinley Burt

Racism: At Home And Aboard PART II

Cist, often referred to as "the kindly and passionate abolitionist, but we have come to know this man better." Last week I revealed the full title of his major work. "... AND The Preservation of the FAVORED RACES of Mankind." He also "hoped for a future with a greater gap between humans and apes, powered by the anticipated extinction of such INTERMEDIATES as chimpanzees and many African Tribes" (see Darwin, 'The Descent of Man').

In the European tradition of his time (19th century), Darwin ignored the facts he must have known, that his Europe was filled with intelligent, superbly competent Africans: Mathematicians, philosophers, university professors, artists, writers, composers, generals, and others. In 1970, the Bonn Federal Republic (West Germany) paid special homage to William Henry Amo, the 18th century African mathematician and philosopher who showed such brilliance by the age of 14 that he was introduced to Leibniz, the greatest of mathematicians. Amo went on to become a full professor at the German universities of Halle and Wittenberg.

It is extremely important for Black Americans to understand that the racist themes underlying American culture today were developed by men such as Darwin,

Broca, and other "great thinkers," who paralyzed a single, irrelevant discovery into a grand scheme for racial dominance - The 'Manifest Destiny' of Darwin's "Favored Races." With a built-in mandate to justify slavery and discrimination, the Europe-worshipping Americans (inferiority complex) who structured our educational and political infrastructure insured that racism would be in place even today. It is not surprising, then, that the Klan, The Order, Skin Heads and other riff-raff can find philosophical comfort in much of the 'scientific' literature. Be sure to check the relevant definitions in the 'authoritative' Encyclopedia Britannica - will blow your mind.

Steven Jay Gould in his price-less book, 'The Mismeasure of Man' (W.W. Norton, 1981), tells us that as late as 30 years ago the famous 'Hall of Man' in the American Museum of Natural History, "still displayed the characters of human races by linear arrays running from APES TO WHITES." He also states that until very recently the standard anatomy illustrations in our medical school texts "depicted a chimp, a Negro, and a white, part by part IN THAT ORDER" (select your doctor with care). In the same 'scientific' mode we find that the prestigious Smithsonian institution in Washington, D.C. — that storehouse of American treasures in technology — does not feature the magnificent contributions of any BLACK INVENTOR: They never heard of the Third Rail, the Refrigerated Box Car or Truck, the Traffic Light, the Automatic Lubricator, the Air Brake, and infinitum.

But take hope, there maybe relief from another part of the world. Last week some of the nation's newspapers reported the research by Japanese scientists who established that the strain of AIDS VIRUS found in AFRICAN MONKEYS IS NOT THE SAME AS THAT FOUND IN HUMANS! Well now, disposing of the racist and shaky proposition of an 'African Source', we may return to the original and more probable conclusions — those based upon the astute observations of the noted African Explorer, Livingstone; "THERE WAS NO SYPHILLIS OR TUBERCULOSIS IN AFRICA BEFORE THE WHITE MISSIONARIES CAME" (or before explorers and colonialist?).

The Lost Science Of Africa

by Dr. Jamil Cherovee

In 1978, anthropology professor, Peter Schmidt, and professor of engineering, Donald Avery, both of Brown University, announced to the world that, between 1,500-2,000 years ago, Africans living on the western shores of Lake Victoria, in Tanzania, had produced carbon steel.

The Afrikans had done this in pre-heated forced-draft furnaces, a method that was technologically more sophisticated than any developed in Europe until the mid-19th century. "We have found," said Professor Schmidt, "a technological process in the Afrikan Iron Age which is exceedingly complex ... To be able to say that technologically superior culture developed in Afrika more than 1,500 years ago overturns popular and scholarly ideas that technological sophistication developed in Europe but not in Afrika."

There were Afrikans still living (The Haya people, for example) who, although they no longer produced steel, remembered, down to the last identity of detail, the machine and the process their ancestors used and were able to reconstruct the furnace and carry out a successful smelt.

When Schmidt and Avery began excavating near Lake Victoria and dug up 13 Iron Age furnaces, they found that "the construction of the furnaces and the composition of the steel was essentially the same."

The temperature achieved in the blast furnace of the Afrikan

steel-smelting machine was higher than any achieved in an European machine until modern times. It was roughly 1,800°C, some 200 to 400°C higher than the highest reached in European cold blast bloomeries. The record for Europe was in an experimental 2nd century Roman shaft furnace where scientist recorded a temperature in the combustion zone of 1,600°C.

The Afrikan superiority was due to the fact that they preheated the air blast by inserting blowpipes into the base of the furnace. This not only led to the extraordinarily high temperatures but also to greater fuel economy. This was important since, in the areas where the Afrikans produced steel, there is evidence of a severe depletion of forest resources, demanding a fuel-saving technology.

The machine they devised and the resourceful way they made use of available materials, is in itself fascinating. For example the pit they dug beneath the furnace was lined with mud made from a termite mound. The termite mound was an excellent choice since termites make their hills of materials that won't absorb water, bits of alumina and silica piled up grain by grain. The Afrikan also introduced a process in their smelting that was very original and in advance of their time, making iron crystals rather than by 'the sintering of solid particles' as in European smelting.



Civil Rights Journal

The Struggle In Natchez

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Victories come in many forms, some of them unexpected. That's the way it was recently in Natchez, Mississippi in Adams County. Back in January we reported to you on the boycott of downtown businesses which had been started there around the situation in the schools. The boycott began because a white principal grabbed a little Black child and ejected him from the cafeteria for sitting next to a little white child.

That incident prompted the African American community to examine other problems in their school system. They formed the Concerned Citizens of Natchez and demanded not only the ouster of the principal but other changes as well. Though the school system in 70% African American, the school administration is 87% white. The group asked that 50% of the instructors be African American and that the administrative staff be fairly representative of Natchez's African American population.

When the town's power structure refused to negotiate in good faith, the African American community began a boycott of all downtown stores. It has been effective. As Rep. Barney Schoby, the town's African American state legislator told us, "The boycott has had a tremendous effect. When I viewed the sales tax collection figures it became clear that the Natchez businesses are not doing as well as they did last year — they are suffering. And they have admitted this." There have been other successes, too. When the community first announced the boycott, the white Mayor of Natchez, Tony Byrne, didn't take it seriously. Then he tried to say that the boycott was being mounted for political reasons. He tried to put the blame for failed negotiations on Rep. Schoby and sent a letter to some of the Black leadership denouncing him.

The African American community asked for the mayor's resignation. They reminded him that back in 1982 he had opposed extension of the Voting Rights Act. They reminded him that when the Federal Government released a study in 1979 saying that Adams County was on a list of the 15 most segregated school systems in the nation, he replied that it was untrue. They reminded him of all this, and still he didn't take them seriously.

On May 24 the African Americans of Natchez voted Tony Byrne out of office after 20 years as Mayor of that city. Now he takes them seriously.

More importantly, this victory has renewed the struggle. The Concerned Citizens of Natchez are continuing to support a court suit to desegregate the schools as a means of improving the educational opportunities of their children. They are continuing their demands that 30% of the \$20 million which the Adams County school board spends each year be used with minority firms. They are continuing their legislative struggle to have their school board members elected, not appointed. They are continuing their struggle for empowerment at every level.

The African American community of Natchez understands that, like the Montgomery bus boycott, this could be a long struggle. As Natchez Alderman George Harden explained when we spoke with him back in January, "Wherever there's a cause, there's sacrifice. The people knew that when we took this thing on." State Representative Schoby recently reaffirmed this when he said, "We're in the trenches and we're set to stay in the trenches for as long as it takes. And if it takes until hell freezes over, we'll be here."

With this kind of commitment and strength, the African American community of Natchez cannot help but win their struggle.