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Justice For Judge Hastings?

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

The fate of Federal District Judge Alcee L. Hastings, the first African American federal judge in the state of Florida, appears to be in considerable jeopardy. Recently a Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee voted unanimously to recommend Hastings' impeachment which would mean his removal from the federal bench in Miami, Florida. This case has profound implications for all African Americans and all others who are committed to justice and freedom.

Back in 1983 Judge Hastings was found not guilty by a jury in Florida. He was found innocent of allegations of accepting a bribe and other charges. Subsequent to Hastings' acquittal he was then charged with ethical and judicial misconduct arising out of the same circumstances and allegations which were originally tried and found not guilty.

It would be a gross understatement to state that the Hastings case has followed the normal course of American jurisprudence. Last year we called attention to what we believed was the making of a political and racial lynching of Judge Hastings by a judicial system gone mad with institutionalized racism.

Then there was a temporary sigh of relief when we learned that the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee charged with the responsibility of the Hastings case was to be chaired by Congressman John Conyers of Detroit, Michigan. Congressman Conyers is well known as one of the strongest advocates on Capitol Hill for civil and human rights. As an African American civil rights leader, John Conyers has had a long distinguished and impressive career in Congress.

I attended a day of the Hastings hearing before the subcommittee. I felt uneasy at the way the procedures were unfolding. It was very clear that some federal law enforcement officials, along with the Reagan administration, have a vendetta against Hastings. Some have said that the vendetta was because Hastings was the first judge to openly oppose Reagan's plan to deport thousands of Haitian refugees from Florida. I have talked to many persons in the civil rights movement about this matter and there appears to be a reluctance to comment publicly on this latest development. This is because of profound respect for Congressman Conyers. We share this respect for Conyers, however we believe that the whole truth of the Hastings affair has yet to be revealed. This is not a case of Conyers vs Hastings or a "Black on Black struggle" as some have mistakenly intimated.

Judge Hastings still deserves the best possible defense and the support of the African American community as he moves to another day in court. The vote by the House Subcommittee amounts to the initiation of an indictment. The trial is yet to come before the Senate. Of course the question now arises: Can the controversial Judge Hastings get a fair trial before the United States Senate? The Hastings case is complicated, but we must not shy away from public expression on this matter. The Hastings case exposes the contradictions of the present system of justice. Justice must be for all or there will be no justice for anyone.

OPEN LETTER TO MY COMMUNITY

A Mother's Point Of View

My thoughts following the shooting by gang members of my daughter in retrospect are these:

Parents, we must rally together to save our children. We must re-claim our youth! Yes, they are our children on loan to us for awhile from God himself.

The first action we must take is to clean up our own lives. Our children, in some cases, are following our lead. They see some of us smoking crack, lying, stealing, getting drunk, and abusing ourselves in many ways. Then some of us even go so far as to abuse our children. We give them an inferiority complex and poor self image by constant name calling and verbal put downs such as "shut up! you nappyheaded nigger. Be quiet before I kill your black a-s, you ugly black b---h, you ain't nothing you black monkey." These are just a few examples of names I have heard parents call their children while standing in grocery check out lines and laundromats, etc.

Parents let us return to the pure worship of God and Him alone. We must show patience, love, understanding, firmness, and self control when dealing with our children. Let us teach our children to value knowledge (parent involvement is necessary), to be charitable (helping those less fortunate), and to be honest in all their activities. But above all to work for the pleasure of God. Our goal in life should be to please God.

Also, please remember, God never changes the condition of a people until they change what is in their hearts.

God also says in the Holy Quran: "Reverence the family ties." Also to achieve in this life you must have "faith and good deeds."

I hope that you have gotten something out of what I have shared with you dear Readers because it is the truth straight from my heart.

Mrs. Naimah Shamsud-Din

EDITORIAL / OPINION

The World Is About Commerce

by Dr. Jamil Cherovee

This year, the Republic of South Korea will host the World Olympics, becoming only the second non-caucasoid nation-Japan was the first-to preside over the games. To have been granted such an honor is solid testament to a nation's economic progress and political stability. I'm inclined to believe, this peninsula nation in Southeast Asia has come a long way since it was a vassal state of Japan and a flash-point of East-West conflict. Technically, the Korean War has not reached a conclusion. The armistice that ended the Korean War on July 27, 1953, has been called the "longest truce in the world." Negotiators from the communist North and capitalist South Korea, supported by the U.S., meet regularly in the little farm village of Pannunjom, which straddles the Military Demarcation line separating North from South at the 38th parallel.

Interest in this part of the world, or at least in the people who have migrated from here to the U.S., has grown in the last few years with the steady influx of Koreans into Black communities across the U.S., cities like Los Angeles, New York, Detroit and Chicago, there is conflict in the communities. One Korean merchant who attended the Uptown community meeting in Chicago, arose to say that one of the major reasons for the tensions is that "We Koreans feel that we are superior to Blacks and inferior to caucasians. We were told prior to coming here by Amerikan missionaries that Black people were criminals and the source of many problems in the country." Imagine that!

Yet, over 30 percent of the Amerikan troops assigned to the Demilitarized zone are Black Amerikans. Without the presence of the Amerikan troops there would be no South Korea as we know it today. Its economic development has far surpassed that of the North. The per capita income in the South is \$2,000; in the North it's only \$760; the Republic GNP is \$81 billion, compared to \$15 billion for the North.

Today there are major Amerikan corporations in South Korea, including Samsung Electronics, a multi-national electronics firm with branches in Europe and Amerika, the Chang-won Industrial Complex, which produces everything from Minolta Cameras to heavy construction equipment for a total of over 3,000 items; and the Hyundai and Doewood automakers, both of which are producing autos with all the latest in high tech gadgetry.

Two years ago, when I visited South Korea, I was treated like royalty. This does not mean, however, that those of us who made the tour are now spokesmen for Korean merchants in Chicago who have been accused of mistreating Black consumers. The tour gave me insight into what Black people must do if they are ever going to be respected as equals in this world. The World Is About Commerce, buying and selling; producing something the world needs.

That's what Black people, serious Black people, must be about, or will forever find themselves dismissed along with the trinkets and trivial that are sold by everyone else.

-Perspectives-

by Professor McKinley Burt

We Are All 'At Risk'

Part II

Last week, I left you in suspense—Why indeed are 'upwardly-mobile' Blacks AT RISK? Haven't we been told that this term is only used to describe the economic and educational situation of that "vast UNDER-CLASS of black poor?" And didn't the great W.E.B. Dubois state that the key to progress for the 'entire' race would be the continuous emergence of a "Talented Tenth" (Elite). So what's the problem?

I cited a number of past approaches 'to the mountain top'—and in each case, a fall back to a prior (often lower) position in economic condition or level of education; Chicago, St. Louis vs East St. Louis, the Baldwin Hills/Windsor Hills Elementary School, and so on. This social phenomenon has been as regular as the ocean tides, also frustrating and disastrous. After the Civil War there was a tremendous surge of ambition and accomplishment led by a talented group at the cutting edge—Key groups of ex-slaves set up schools, churches, roads and governmental infrastructure, while others became major contributors of inventions and innovation that made the industrial revolution possible.

But, by the turn of the century, this promising real-time "emancipation" had fallen beneath the onslaught of Jim Crow laws, the Klan and rampant discrimination in every area. There remained, however, a basic Black infrastructure in business, education and social agencies—and it is in this context that we found a considerable cooperation and association between the two groups defined 'today' as the Black Elite and the Black Underclass, respectively. We may say that this came about only as the result of intensive segregation, but that begs the point, when today our precarious

and chaotic condition requires the most intense cooperation of all groups of Blacks. The calamity ranges from Gangs to Broken Families.

Why is it so difficult today to implement a similar process of cooperation and support which can be drawn from our history? It would seem that it has been the "onslaught of the GANGS" which has caught the rapt attention (and ACTION) of the Elite—Those who belatedly realize that we are all of the same interconnected group, no matter how far out one may move. It occurs that the basic structure of today's 'new' middle class may be flawed. Too many have adopted the sophisticated (and overly-expensive) lifestyles portrayed in the full-page color advertisements in Ebony and Essence magazines—Ads sponsored in the most part by purveyors of alcohol, tobacco and expensive cars. How long has it been since Veblen coined the phrase "Conspicuous Consumption?"

Compare this economic naivete with the cooperative and very productive financial investments being made in Black communities across the nation by the newest immigration from Asia (among others). These people are increasingly filling the retail and service needs of the urban Black underclass—and like the European immigrants before them, they are using the profits to EDUCATE THEIR NEXT GENERATION, and to finance commercial enterprise far from the 'Inner City.'

It is my fervent hope that those who are showing a new interest in the structure and families of the Black community will lock themselves into the process for the LONG TERM. We can't afford the processes I have cited where there is a continuous phenomenon of a rise and fall in EXCELLENCE. The only way is for all of us to be involved every day, and in every way. "Our Windsor Hills Schools" and all of our institutions—must be for the long term. We had no problem with this 4,000 years ago, nor a hundred years ago. History is there for our guide.

The Bentsen Mistake

by Dr. Manning Marable

Although Jesse Jackson managed to dominate the news at the recent Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, the most significant event to transpire occurred several days before the gathering. Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis's selection of conservative Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen for the Vice Presidential slot represents a potential watershed for the progressive wing of the Democratic Party, and a fundamental challenge for the Rainbow Coalition.

In the days shortly before the Vice Presidential selection, there was considerable speculation that Ohio Senator John Glenn would get the nod. A popular Midwestern politician, the choice of the former astronaut would have guaranteed Ohio's electoral votes, and possibly the votes of Michigan and Illinois. Glenn was also strong in the South on ideological grounds. But there was also speculation within all the confusion in the Dukakis camp that the V.P. selection would not be made at the expense of maintaining cordial relations with the Rainbow Coalition.

A few observers thought that Lloyd Bentsen had an outside shot at the Vice Presidential offer, but many dismissed the prospects of Dukakis moving so far to the right on his national ticket. After all, Bentsen represented the "Tory Wing" of the conservative faction of Democrats in the Congress. He was a passionate supporter of aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, a motley crew of anti-communists, terrorists and drug smugglers. Bentsen advocated prayer in the public schools; Dukakis was opposed to this. Bentsen supported the B-1 Bomber; Dukakis was against the bomber. Bentsen embrace, and Dukakis opposed, the 1981 Reagan Tax Cut, which gave billions to the rich from the paychecks of the

middle class and the poor. With the possible exception of Sam Nunn, Bentsen was surely the most conservative Democrat in the U.S. Senate. Although he had defeated Bush back in 1970 during his initial race for the Senate, there was absolutely no guarantee that Bentsen could carry Texas for the Democrats in 1988. Moreover, Bentsen was little known across the South, unlike Nunn or even Al Gore of Tennessee.

But Dukakis's staff gave several basic reasons for the selection of Bentsen. The first was rooted in history: no Democratic candidate for president in the twentieth century had ever won without carrying the state of Texas. Secondly, Bentsen is fluent in Spanish, and would be able to assist Dukakis in reaching the growing electoral bloc of Hispanics across the Southwest. But the most important factor considered by Dukakis was the ideological perspective. The addition of Bentsen to the ticket sent a message to the Party's powerbrokers, to Wall Street, and to executives in petrochemicals, construction, real estate, high tech, and other growth sectors of the economy. It proclaimed, in no uncertain terms, the return to power and prestige of the "Reagan Democrats" within the corridors of power. Dukakis was stating: "I'm a man you can do business with. I'm not an ideologue of the left, but a pragmatist of the center." More to the point, Dukakis was issuing a racial statement by selecting Bentsen: "Despite Jesse's unprecedented victories in the caucuses and primaries, the controls of the Party are firmly in the hands of the right and center." ■ Continued Next Week

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.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL



by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Racially Motivated Violence Increases

Outbreaks of racially motivated violence perpetrated against the African-American, Latin American, Asian American and Native American communities are spreading across the United States at an alarming rate. This type of violent racism has become once again a serious national problem.

Congressman Peter W. Rodino of New Jersey has introduced a legislative bill to establish a special federal commission to investigate racially motivated violence and to recommend preventive governmental action. The name of the bill is H.R. 3914, "Commission on Racially Motivated Violence Act of 1988." We support the passage of this legislation.

Rodino, who is Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, explained his reason for introducing the bill. Rodino stated, "If some Americans must live in fear for their safety, none of us is truly safe. For this reason, I am introducing legislation to create a bipartisan Commission on Racially Motivated Violence." Racial violence, Rodino concluded, "is an insidious cancer on our society that must be eliminated."

Professor Fred R. Harris of the University of New Mexico and former member of the U.S. Senate gave testimony before Congress supporting the Rodino Bill. Dr. Harris was a member of the Kerner Commission that issued the 1967 report documenting the causative factors of the urban riots of the 1960's. The Kerner Commission concluded that white racism was a key factor that led to racial

violence twenty years ago. Dr. Harris today suggests that the problem of white racism is still persistent.

The State of New York has just released the final report of a year-long study conducted by Governor Mario Cuomo's Task Force on Bias Related Violence. This report documents the rise in racially motivated violence across New York. The Task Force concluded, "Violence directed against persons or groups because of their race, ethnicity, or national origin tears at the very fabric of a democratic, pluralistic society. Such attacks can be neither ignored or tolerated."

We are concerned that the issues of race and violence have been studied and restudied for decades. Yet there has not been a national priority placed on solving this devastating social ill. After the Kerner Commission issued its report 20 years ago, the recommendations were never implemented. What actually occurred was that Richard Nixon was elected President. Nixon's "law and order" only camouflaged the reality of racial violence.

We know that during the last seven years of the Reagan Administration, similarly to the Nixon era, racial violence has had a dramatic increase.

Thus, our support of the Rodino Bill calling for the establishment of another Commission is within the context of expressing the need for all levels of government to get serious and re-direct priority funding to challenge racism. Anything less would be engaging in just another study.