

# PORTLAND OBSERVER

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## Guest Editorial A Separate People Or A Common Cause?

by Sam Kahl

Divide and Conquer is ancient strategy; used with great success by conquerors and imperial tyrants throughout the centuries of our species' struggle for identity, growth and liberation. The way Divide and Conquer works is like this: If I can succeed in getting you to war with your neighbor, then I just might succeed in ruling over both of you while you're preoccupied with your hatred of each other. Indeed, if this is my game, then I will view my self-interest to be to sow and cultivate fear, jealousy, mistrust, resentment and rage among you. I will exploit your ignorance, misdirect your energies and sow division among you, setting neighbor against neighbor, friend against friend, sibling against sibling.

If your ego has sufficiently swallowed up your reason, your emotions may soar with some shallow victories I've allowed you to win. Even if you disarm your stupor long enough to identify me as your enemy, I can probably prevent you from doing anything by keeping your potential supporters in turmoil and division. Moreover, I can probably get your own people to kill you, their potential liberator, as an enemy or devil. The tragedy of it all is, we are all losers, you and I, when we participate in such a distortion of the musically generated laws that regulate galaxies and solar systems, the living cell and atoms.

The pages of history are branded with such outrages to the human identity. During the 17th century Europe was ravaged by a bloody contest that lasted thirty years. As the poet and dramatist Friedrich Schiller demonstrates in his "History of the Thirty Years War," small minded persons were empowered to contest over the resources of Europe by whipping up hatred between Catholics and Protestants. However, as the shifting alliances proved, the ensuing "holy wars" were just a pretext for ambitious persons to loot the wealth of civilized society. Common citizens, plagued by economic recession, material scarcity and cultural poverty, joined not in a common cause to solve problems which plagued them; rather, like hungry dogs frenzied by the blood of a single piece of meat, the poor fools joined the Gods of War in a blood-feast of slaughter and brutality.

China, India and the Middle East were conquered and maintained under imperial domination not so much by force of arms as by mistrust and rivalries nurtured among the captive peoples themselves. Jews and Arabs were bartered and sold in the political backrooms of London, Paris, and later Moscow and Washington.

D.C. Today, while global multiple crises - pestilence, drought and civil turmoil - assault the walls of tranquility, two non-entities will contest each other this coming election to avoid the real issues of the human condition. You and I, meanwhile, will be supposed to be worked up into a frenzy over whether it is the Democratic Party or the Republican Party which will give to us personally a crumb of existence in this no-man's land that life has become.

Demagogues whip up a lynch-mob antagonism between business and labor against the Japanese and toward each other. They are convenient targets for frustrated people. Bush and Dukakis, reading identical scripts with minor variations, will castigate the federal budget deficit and decry public spending, thereby helping to psychologically condition us to accept cuts in our consumption and our living standards, but they're not brave enough to spell this out openly.

Finally, to bring this home to a focal point, the Black community, something like a Third World nation within domestic borders, has been conditioned to play a useful role in the scheme of subjugation and control, and it is not just Black people who are victims. Have you ever noticed that real problems, such as gangs and crack houses, are associated in the public media with the Black community? I am not disputing the reality of a high proliferation of these problems in the North Portland area. What I dispute is the way the facts are used, exploiting lingering perceptions that Blacks are "less than"—in ability, in culture, in personhood—to insinuate the misconception that the problems we face are peculiar to the Black community. What is the purpose of this? To keep the "rest of us" off-balance, lulled with a false sense of security in an increasingly unsafe world of our making, by subtly conditioning us to believe that it is "their" problem, not "ours," thank God!

Tell me, who is the sucker in all of this? While we fear and degrade each other, often mindlessly, the problems remain unsolved and growing. Can any of us really believe that there are boundary lines that will contain problems which fester, so far, in only certain areas of our local and global communities? This is how Divide and Conquer works. It is based on an imagined war of "turfs"—physical and psychological. The way out of our becoming a "conquered" people is to disarm mistrust, fear and ignorance, become an actively self-governing citizenry and participate in solutions. Our safety is in each other!

# EDITORIAL / OPINION



by Dr. Jamil Cheroove

Easily the most interesting book that I have read about science and scientists is Robert C. Hayden's 'Seven Amerikan Scientists'. The book is a collection of seven brief biographical sketches of Black men who have achieved success and fame in the sciences in Amerika. The volume, geared for students in the fifth through ninth grades, is both fascinating and enjoyable reading for students of all ages.

It begins with Charles R. Drew (1904-1950) the creator of blood plasma in 1940. Drew was later to be refused a blood transfusion in Tuskegee, Alabama, after being injured in an auto collision, and died on his way to a segregated hospital miles away.

Probably just as important as Drew was Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, who in 1893 performed the first open heart surgery in history on a man who was stabbed in Chicago. Although he was the first one to do so, Williams is not generally given credit for this distinction. This is because he refused to publish a report of this event until 1897, after a German doctor, Dr. William Rehn, who reported a similar achievement fully three years after Williams in 1896.

The two scientists most well-known to Black people are Benjamin Banneker and George Washington Carver. Banneker was a writer, scientist and surveyor who published an annual almanac from 1792 to 1802. Banneker was also instrumental in designing the city of Washington, D.C. as the nation's capital.

## Scientists Are Urgently Needed

George Washington Carver invented over 300 uses for the peanut and over 100 uses for the sweet potato. Others covered in the book are Matthew Henson (1865-1955), an explorer, Ernest E. Just (1883-1941) and Charles H. Turner (1867-1923).

I found 'Blacks In Amerika's War', by Robert W. Mullen, a repudiation of the Amerikan military by Black people, in uniform and out, may offer one of the most fundamental assessments of Afro resistance to racism. This reality gives weight to Robert Muller's narrative. As a super-pamphlet or mini-book, it lacks the definitive scholarship of Ulysees Lee's 'The Employment of Negro Troops After World War I', the analytical probing of the chapter on war and racism in Sidney Wilhelm's 'Who Needs the Negro', or the still sharper revolutionary analyses of several pieces in 'Vietnam and Black Amerika'.

Instead, Mullen offers a quick, readable overview of Afro-American stances in relation to all Amerikan wars, making it the only work in print with that range. Modest in interpretation, the account still makes plain the "Use them now, drop them later" policy of the U.S. government towards its Black semi-citizens in times of international trouble. The author also unearths valuable information about the Black involvement (on both sides) in the War against the Philippines, 1899-1902, and provides some fresh glances at Black power agitation in the armed forces during the Vietnam War.



by Harold C. Williams

The other day I had the occasion to witness a phenomenon that is unique and heartbreaking. I saw two beautiful people, one male, one female, he represented what is strong, dynamic and innovative in our society and she is all that represents beauty, class and passion.

Every culture has marveled at his intellect and his strength. His athletic ability is matched by none. His intellectual potential reaches beyond the universe. Every culture copies him, but none wants to be him.

Her smile radiates and causes the universe to change its focus. She gives a robin a reason to sing. She gives softness to the breeze in spring. When she touches one, it is ever so gently. You are filled with compassion when you see her smile.

## "The Other Side"

But, the pain of it all is this strong and handsome man, this compassionate and beautiful woman, are strangers in our society. They give the best of themselves to everyone else, but never to one another.

Cultures have built their images around her statuesque being. Kings have called him in for counsel and they give and give to everyone else, but not to one another. Oh, what a tragedy! You know the world would stop for a moment if these two individuals would come together, look each other in the eye, set aside their petty differences and embrace each other's strengths. These two strangers are leaving a void in our society and they must come together to give hope to the little boys and the little girls of our future.

Lets take a moment and say hello, Black man, Black woman. Black man you are the father of civilization and the king of the planet Earth. Black woman you are the mother of civilization and the queen of the planet Earth. If you would speak to one another and become one, our community would be whole again. Hello Black woman, hello Black man. Isn't it time to be friends?

## PORTLAND OBSERVER

"The Eyes and Ears of the Community"

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## CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL



by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

## Mission To Angola

The Government of the People's Republic of Angola has issued an invitation to African-American leaders to visit their nation. I recently received a message from Angola's President, Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, encouraging efforts to increase the level of understanding and to strengthen the relationship between the people of Angola and the people of the United States. In particular, President Dos Santos noted the strategic importance and role of the African-American church in helping to build bridges of good will between the two nations.

Earlier this year, during a visit to Angola, I was most impressed by the commitment and valor of the Government of Angola to defend the territorial boundary and the sovereignty of their nation. At this moment the eyes of the world are focused on Angola as a nation that is successfully repelling the racist apartheid regime of South Africa. At a time when the intransigence of South Africa appears to be as fossilized as ever, it is, indeed, critical to the future of the region of southern Africa for the Angolans to continue to win a victory against South Africa.

The extent to which Angola is successful is the extent to which Namibia's liberation will be enhanced. It is also the extent to which apartheid in South Africa will ultimately be dismantled. Thus, one can understand why Angola dares to allow the African National Congress and the Southwest African People's Organization to maintain bases in their country.

The serious solidarity work necessary to assist the struggle in southern Africa often involves risk and faith. By the time you read this commentary, I will be in Angola along with a delegation of nineteen other church and civil rights leaders. They represent ten states and local churches from four denominations: the United Church of Christ, United Methodist

Church, the National Progressive Baptist Church, and the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Included in the delegation are: Rev. Al Sampson and Rev. Leroy Sanders from Chicago; Rev. Edwin R. Edmonds from New Haven; Rev. Nelson Taylor from Biloxi, Mississippi; Rev. John Mendez and Rev. Leon White from North Carolina; Rev. Wendell Anthony from Detroit; Rev. Mary Anne Bellinger from Atlanta; Rev. Garland Jones from Richmond; Rev. Irvine Bryer from New York City; Rev. Leticia Rouser from Lexington, Kentucky; and Atty. Lewis Meyers from Chicago; Atty. Deborah Jackson from New York and African-American media specialists Linda Kay Brown, Phil Jones, Lamont Gonzalez, and Annette Lawrence.

The central objectives of the 18-day trip are to engage in a fact-finding mission, to learn first-hand the reality of the situation in Angola today, particularly the effect of South Africa's continued invasion of Angola territory; to investigate some of the atrocities committed against the people of Angola by South Africa's surrogate, UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi; to strengthen the relationship between the churches of Angola and African-American churches in the United States; to conduct a mission of good will and to help improve the relationship between the people of Angola and the people of the United States; and to observe the progress and development of the Angolan economy, culture and society.

It is our intention, when we return to the United States, to share our experiences and our learnings with as many people as possible. We are thankful to the Government of Angola for providing the opportunity for this trip. Yet, it is our responsibility to make sure that more of the truth of Angola's reality gets back to our communities. The best weapon against oppression is to expose it with the truth.

## Perspectives 'School Daze'



by Professor McKinley Burt

"Standard Cursive or Italic Cursive handwriting? Zaner-Bloser or Hieroglyphics, What's in a name? It is easy to tell that the Fall Equinox is approaching, and so are the perennial—and diverse—advocates in the educational establishment. The public's mandate to teach the student writing as well as reading may have lacked the critical directive to "just let the teachers do it—they know how!"

So much for the School Board's Curriculum Committee, but yon National Educational Association has also anticipated a fall intersection with the ecliptic—The plane of the Earth's orbit. This month, the Chief Astronomer and President of N.E.A., Mary Futrell, provides us with "An Open Letter to America's High School Students." Before I comment, let me refresh the reader on several earlier (and very expensive) trips by the educational fraternity/sorority: The "New Math" for one, and "Metric," for another. The millions spent in Oregon—over a billion, nationally—did not markedly arrest the general decline in education—Sound and Fury!

We may abstract from Futrell's 'open letter': "... N.E.A. reminds students that teachers and parents need their help to make education the best that it can be ...

discuss curriculum with your parents, school administrators and teachers." What about the counselors? Most specific to the point I wish to make, we have this: "Many of the jobs that were available to ... dropouts just 20 years ago have gone abroad. As our country moves from an industrial economy to one based on information and services, you will have to be better educated."

I doubt very seriously if today's high school students, many educationally disabled, are able to mount a critical analysis of their curriculum in respect to the complicated interface with information, technology, and career preparation. (Perhaps it was they who advocated The New Math and Metric capers?) I can't even believe this ploy when, over twenty years ago (1966 Award), I demonstrated to several school districts and the National Science Foundation that successful learning models are designed only by those with "real-time experience" in the critical areas. Buick used to advertise, "Ask the man who owns one."

In a December, 1987 interview by this newspaper, I described this interactive, hands-on system involving student, teacher, industry, on-line computers and teletypes and the underlying mathematics and communication modes. The classroom become a site for simulation of "the real world" and proved to be an effective and fascinating learning tool—language, mathematics and technology walking together!

Thanks to that major educational conference at Gearhart, Oregon last month (Partners In Excellence), I will be demonstrating the system in six cities this winter and installing it in two districts—with the addition of Satellite Transmissions!