

COMMUNITY FORUM

The Other Side



by Harold C. Williams

In Northeast Portland there are three great friendships in the Black community that I feel are important for the community to know about. These friendships go back to childhood. They span well over 30 years.

The first friendship is between Mr. Theotis Cason and Mr. Joe Smith. These two gentlemen have been friends since childhood and are now in business together and making a very positive statement in the business community.

They own Cason's Fine Foods, a meat market in our community which all of us should patronize (and, by the way, the barbeque is excellent). Theotis and Joe work long hours, sometimes 12 to 14 hours per day. Their store represents the positiveness that our children should get to know. Their long hours are paying off and they reflect what friendship is about: commitment, understanding, and hard work.

The second great friendship is between Mr. Ray Leary and Mr. Tony Hopson. These gentlemen have been friends since childhood as well. They were great athletes in their youth and are committed to educational excellence. They have made positive contributions to the youth in our community. They invested their own funds and knocked on many doors to expand the friendship that they have between themselves to others in our community. Ray Leary and Tony Hopson are a class act. These gentlemen showcase the positive image that every young Black male should emulate. This great friendship between Ray Leary and Tony Hopson is community born and bred and now they are passing the baton to the future.

The third great friendship is between myself, Harold Williams, my buddy and my friend, James Cason. Our friendship goes back to 1951 and we have struggled to make a difference. We happen to be businessmen in the communi-

ty. We own Pen-Nor, Inc., a mechanical contracting firm. We have fought hard to employ people in our business from inner Northeast. Our friendship is one of absolute commitment. We know the price we must pay in maintaining the friendship and commitment to one another, but we also carry the dreams of 26 people in our employment. To make their dreams a reality, we have to meet a payroll every Friday and I assure you the battles between he and I sometimes are vicious.

We differ in approach and style: he direct, me a little subtle. But when there is a war in our com-



Life long friends Ray Leary and Tony Hopson.

munity that will give hope and opportunity to youth, employment and dreams to parents, I would ask for no other person to be in the trench with me than my friend, James Cason. We struggle daily with our lives on the line with everything we possess to keep our business afloat. The game of life that we are committed to in our friendship is build a foundation that will last generations after we are gone. And I would assure you that is the dream and the commitment of Theotis and Joe, Ray and Tony. So, this way, I tell you of three great friendships. And by the way we are Black men committed to the community dream.

Racial Oppression In America



by Dr. Jamil Cherovee

To better understand racism, one should read "Racial Oppression In America," by Robert Blauner. Blauner's book is most appropriately contrasted with an earlier classic work on race relations by Gunnar Myrdal.

In Myrdal's book "An American Dilemma," he put forth the premise that American so-called Christian caucasoids were troubled by the contradiction between their egalitarian creed and the treatment accorded Afro-Americans.

The Blauner thesis is that the racial oppression to which Blacks are subjected represents a microcosmic pattern of internal colonialism that provides caucasoids with certain status and economic gains which are integral elements in the functioning of racial capitalism.

This book should be read because while it is a refreshing departure from most sociological texts on race relations, it still retains its scientific character. Although Blauner's work is not the first one to apply the internal colonialism model to American race relations, it is, to date, the most theoretically sophisticated work produced on the topic. The internal colonialism approach takes much of what is relevant in Marxist theory and uses it to explain the dynamics of a social order based on political and economic exploitation in which racism is an indispensable element.

"Racial Oppression in America" illustrates how the Black community represents an

internal colony in so-called Christian caucasoid Amerika, subject to the same degree—if not in form, in substance—of political and economic rule by alien caucasoids. In contrast to Marxist theory about the caucasoid worker's racism being a manifestation of false class consciousness, Blauner asserts that the caucasoid proletariat is objectively, and consciously, aware that it has gained much from the oppression of Blacks and stands to lose something by its elimination. They gain by the status differentials based on race since any caucasoid in superior in status to any Black. Economically, they gain since a colonial society will usually fill the lowest hardest and dirtiest jobs from the Third World population. Any job primarily associated with being Black usually pays less than those occupations dominated by caucasoids.

We only get a broad outline of the dynamics of internal colonialism in this book. Blauner originally wrote most of the chapters as separate articles which were published elsewhere. He does not, for instance, detail how colonialism operates in specific areas such as crime, politics or education. Yet, he has accomplished a masterful task in delineating the true cause of racial oppression. His analysis may aid us in seeking relevant solutions to Amerika's real dilemma: To continue to retain its gains based on racism or risk the ultimate social confrontation and lose everything.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

A City Out Of Control



by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

The situation in Yonkers, New York is getting out of hand. One thing we have learned from three decades of the Civil Rights Movement is that whenever racism occurs, no matter what its form, it must be challenged.

There have been numerous accounts of increased racially motivated violence during the last several years across the state of New York. In fact, I have just finished serving as a member of Gov. Cuomo's Task Force on Bias-Related Violence. Many New Yorkers were gratified to see Gov. Cuomo at least speak out against the rise of this type of racism. The situation in Yonkers is an opportunity for the governor to also speak out against another form of racism: institutionalized racism in the area of housing.

Yet, the governor appears to have joined the ranks of those who would apologize for racism rather than seek to challenge it.

After years of litigation, the city of Yonkers has finally come to its last legal stand in its attempts to prevent needed middle income housing from being built in predominantly white, middle class areas of Yonkers. U.S. Federal Judge Leonard Sand has now issued fines of hundreds of dollars a day against the city for its refusal to abide by the federal court order to build the housing.

Statements by local residents point up vividly the racist basis of their opposition. One woman stated, "I shouldn't be saying this, but let those blacks learn to respect what they have first. Let them earn it and not expect to get

a nice home by getting a check from welfare."

Mrs. Regina Pellegrino, one particularly vocal Yonkers resident, says, "We didn't move from the Bronx for this. Look at this place. We mow the lawn, keep it clean." She then adds that she expects drug use, garbage and unruly children to accompany the new middle income housing. As the New York Times concludes, "when [opponents] visualize their prospective neighbors, it is undeniable they see black people."

But support for the city's opposition has not just come from local residents. Letters of support for the racist stand which Yonkers is taking have come in from all over the nation.

Yet, Gov. Cuomo states that this is not a racial dispute, claiming he is "absolutely convinced it is one of class."

That's just like saying that Michael Griffith was beaten to death in Howard Beach, Queens not because he was Black, but because he was poor.

Judge Sand noted in court that Cuomo, as governor, had the power to remove local elected officials who broke the law and suggested that Cuomo remove the Yonkers council members. Thus far, Mr. Cuomo has refused to challenge the racist actions of the city council, but, instead, has added his voice and the integrity of his office to offer what he says is, "a compromise."

Mr. Cuomo, you cannot—and you should not—compromise with racism.

Perspectives

A Rose Is A Rose



by Professor McKinley Burt

That line from a poem by Gertrude Stein is a teaching tool par excellence—any grade, anytime, anywhere. At least I have always found it to be so, especially when reinforced by Shakespeare's, "What's in a name?"

When I was a volunteer teacher at the Black Educational Center (K1 to K4), my lesson plans included a mathematics exercise now copyrighted for national distribution. It recognizes that there is such a variety of 'names', titles and symbols for the very same concept—whether dealing with arithmetic, algebra, computer programs or science—that the child often becomes confused or lost in the maze of substitutions and manipulations required for a solution.

My approach was simply to use everyday objects as 'symbols' (codes) and place them in point-to-point correspondence with the Number Line: Tomato = 1, Potato = 2, and Orange = 4. Here, one has not only provoked imagination, but has established a viable retention by using the 'familiar'. Now, we may say, "What's in a word?" Try it with your child as follows:

After lining up these objects before the class, each beneath its number-equivalent, I would demonstrate that no matter how we manipulated the 'order' (sequence) of the objects, they would always retain their original identity; tomato is always one, potato is always two, and so on. Being taught that the values in our number system are based upon 'order of appearance', the children soon perceived that a manipulation which placed potato (2) before tomato (1) represented a value of 21, or that apple (3), followed by an orange (4), yielded 34.

Being brighter than we think, these five-to nine-year-olds figured out on their own that you ought to be able to subtract a potato from an orange and get two for a remainder, or multiply an apple by an orange and get 12. The next week, you could fire up their imaginations by telling

them, "We have moved to a New Planet where 'clothing' is the name of the game. Now, the same numbers are represented by the symbols, 'hat,' 'shoe,' 'tie' and 'glove.'" Was it the dormouse that told Alice in Wonderland, "Things are what I say they are?"

We need to get our children ready for a 'learning experience' where they must constantly manipulate symbols and words whose values change to fit the occasion or discipline—the computer program for a particular accounting system may employ the exact same logic and relationships as a system that accounts for energy distribution in a mechanical process. The side or hypotenuse of a triangle may, in fact, represent the values of an electrical system, but, remember, a value is a value is a value! This rose is for you.

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