

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL



### Institutionalized Racism

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Racism can be defined as economically-empowered racial prejudice and discrimination. Although there have been some recent scholarly attempts to deny the persistence of racism as a major social problem confronting the social order in the United States, the evidence of blatant societal racism continues to be exposed.

Recently in the state of New York, a report issued by the state appointed Task Force on the Education of Children and Youth At Risk concluded that racism is an institutional reality in the public school system. The findings of this report have far-reaching implications for the entire nation.

The report revealed that New York has two unequal public school systems: one in the areas where the rich live and the other in the areas where the poor live. The Task Force concluded that racism was the underlying causative factor that created this inequality. Students in the affluent and rich areas were predominately white and students from the poor areas were predominately African-American and Latino American.

The Task Force stated that the first-tier or rich schools held "high expectations for their students but at the second-tier or poor schools low expectations and aspirations are communicated to these students, who are not given a full opportunity to

succeed." The report further found "or society's acceptance of two unequal educational systems is putting us at risk of creating a permanent underclass in New York and the nation."

Racial and ethnic communities across the nation in particular should become aware of this shocking report. It appears that there are deliberate decisions being made by school administrators to structure racial and ethnic students to failure. The report explicitly revealed "racism is expressed in a variety of ways: inadequate resources to those most in need; perpetuating segregated schools; and in some schools, the tracking of minority students into less rigorous academic programs without regard for individual abilities, interests and potential.

This institutionalization of racism must be challenged by all who believe in justice and equality. The last eight years of the Reagan Administration has set the stage for the gradual return to the days of Jim Crow. While there has been progress toward eliminating some of the vestiges of overt racism, the pervasive nature of racism today demands vigilance, determination and constant social action to prevent a march back into history. The future will be determined by the strength of our continued struggle for racial justice.



## Along the Color Line

Dr. Manning Marable

### Developing Black Leaders

The 1988 presidential campaign elevated two candidates who failed miserably to display any leadership capacity or ability to articulate the material and social interests of millions of working Americans. Similarly, within Black America, there exists a type of leadership crisis. To be sure, Jesse Jackson and the late Harold Washington exhibited a capacity to mobilize the masses with a progressive public policy agenda, and inspired thousands to care deeply about getting involved in politics. But one cannot say the same for the bulk of the Black elected officials, civil rights spokespersons and others who are projected in the media as token representatives of the Black community. More seriously, we are not approaching the problem of leadership as a challenge of development. Leaders are not born, they are made; Martin Luther King did not become a leader solely due to his individual and innate abilities, but rather because of institutional and group factors which created the proper environment which could produce a person with such leadership qualities.

If we are truly serious about challenge of building Black political power in the 1990s, we must be equally serious about cultivating new leaders who have the capacity to initiate new organizations which advance our economic, political, cultural and social objectives. As the results of the recent election make clear, Blacks cannot look to the Democratic Party to show the way for our own interests.

What is a leader? A leader is basically an individual who has very strong views or opinions, who seeks to realize these views in modifying the behavior or activity of others within society. History shows repeatedly that leaders are not born, they are made by social conditions. Leadership isn't absolute, but a relative quality. In other words, no person is, or is not, a leader. All of us have the capacity to develop our abilities to become leaders. Leadership is therefore a capacity, which can be learned, cultivated, and expanded upon.

From the perspective of Black history, there have been many leaders, women and men of talent and ability who displayed the capacity to motivate millions of our people to struggle for social justice, economic and political rights. But if we study the careers of individuals such as W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King, Ida B. Wells, Malcolm X, and others, one finds a number of common traits.

Black leaders have usually been individuals who know the value of long term political relationships over one shot deals. Anyone can make a political agreement which gives one a temporary advantage over someone else. You can also see this in the corporate world today, in which businesses foul the air and poison the waters with wastes, because in the short run, it is profitable to do so. But effective leadership means taking the long view. The one shot approach creates superficial advantages for the minority, but can produce disaster for the majority. The long

view implies a mature political perspective which takes into account the totality of society. This may mean short-term sacrifices have to be made in order to achieve long term gains.

A real leader learns that you should never burn a bridge, because you might have to cross back over it one day. One common characteristic of those who occupy influential positions within the Black movement is a tendency toward pettiness, attacking one's opponents without presenting constructive and realistic alternatives. Real leadership means an approach towards negotiations with one's opponents which transcends immediate concerns. This also implies the development of an agenda which advances one's group interests, which informs negotiations. It's crucial to express disagreements yet to retain a degree of mutual respect and communications with all types of constituencies.

Successful Black political leaders have always understood that you can't hit a target you never set. If you aim for objectives which do not challenge you, which are not difficult to obtain, then a person doesn't learn the capacity for leadership. Setting ambitious targets and objectives which are practical yet visionary, which are set just beyond our current capacity, cultivates a determination and spirit for achievement.

Great Black leaders realize that in solidarity there is strength. A leader is not powerful because he or she is articulate, or passionate in rhetoric. A leader's vital strength comes directly from close ties and extensive contacts within his or her constituency. Leaders are powerful because of the active struggle for empowerment based within their group. Marcus Garvey, the great Black nationalist of the early 1900s, was not a successful leader solely because he was articulate. Garvey's leadership was based in the solidarity of Black people within his organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association. King's leadership was reinforced and magnified by the activism of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Black leaders who have achieved greatness comprehended that power is exercised by groups, not by individuals. To wield decisive influence, you must build a strong organization. And finally Black leaders understand that freedom is indivisible. You cannot be free by yourself, in isolation. Freedom is collective, not individual. No single Black woman or man can be free unless all of us achieve political respect and economic equality.

The most important challenge for Black American politics in the 1990s is the cultivation and development of a new generation of leaders, in business, politics, the church, labor unions, and in all vocations. We cannot gain power, much less full equality, unless we nurture leaders whose values and philosophy advances our interests.

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

### 1990 CENSUS: You Count Today — For A Better Tomorrow!

We all benefit from a complete and accurate census: the distribution of funds to State and local governments, education, transportation, and housing depend on the population characteristics.

To reach our 1990 goal of a complete and accurate count, the Census Bureau will work with a variety of local organizations such as The Vancouver National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to increase the awareness of the usefulness of Census data products and services.

Please join us in the first of a three part series: **Why Census Information Is Important To You!** Sunday, Nov. 20, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Vancouver Mall

Community Room, 5001 N.E. Thurston Way, Vancouver, Washington.

Val Thomas, Media Specialist from our Regional Census Center, will join us to give an up-to-date, exciting and informative overview presentation of the 1990 Census.

After 5 years with King Broadcasting Company, Miss Thomas is now with the Census Bureau, sharing the impact census data on communities. Too often communities miss out on vital information because it is not translated into easy to understand language. So join us for an informative afternoon with the Vancouver NAACP and the Census Bureau. For more details please contact the NAACP Vancouver, Washington Branch.

## Perspectives

### The Black Church A Real History

Part 2



by Professor McKinley Burt

Continuing from last week, I present more documentation of the African presence in the formation of our religions. For example in the **Old Testament** (1 Kings vii.23, and 2 Chronicles iv.2) we find the following verse:

"Also, he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof, and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about."

Here we have a description of the Tabernacle at Jerusalem in terms of an important ancient African measurement, the cubit. The **Book of Kings** was edited by the Jews as a religious work about 500 B.C., but the importation of African mensuration and culture began a thousand years earlier with **Moses and the Exodus**. It is the same with the **Ark of the Covenant**, where Smith (A dictionary of the Bible, 1865) gives a description, "2-1/2 cubits long by 1-1/2 cubits broad and deep (Ex.xxx). Illustrations from Wilkinson (Ancient Egypt) show the 'Jewish' Ark to be an exact replica of the **Egyptian Arks** found in the tombs of African Pharaohs of Egypt and Nubia, buried thousands of years earlier. The Ark occupied a prominent place in **Solomon's Temple** (1k.viii.8).

Is it any wonder then that Isaac Newton (Universal Gravitation) centered his research upon ancient African measurements—And that his major sermons delivered at Trinity, dwelled upon the Book of Kings and the **Book of Numbers** (Manuel, Isaac Newton: Historian). And so it is even less a wonder that **Napoleon's** 1803 expedition to Africa included an entire shiplod of historians, astronomers, mathematicians, and artists who tapped the same African

motherlode and brought it back to Europe. The final standards for the metric system (meter) were based upon the cubit and The Great Pyramid.

It matters not whether we examine the Bible (and Jewish sojourns) from the stand point of events that occurred to the East of Israel/Judah, in Africa, or in the Holy Land itself—The African presence is pervasive. In the East, (what is now Iran and Iraq) the land mass lay astride the 'Ethiopian Sea', now called the **Persian Gulf**. The ethnic composition of the people dictated the name just as the **Atlantic Ocean** appears on ancient maps as the **Ethiopic Ocean**.

From the monuments at **Susa** to the skulls found at **Elam**, Archaeologists like Sir Henry Johnson are able to say that, "The Elamites were a Negroid people with kinky hair ... transmitted the racial type to the Jews and Syrians, and Babylonians." (see pp. 278 Snowden, Blacks in Antiquity; pp. 58-61 Rogers, Sex and Race, Vol. 1)

We have this from Diop, the noted African Historian (p. 72 The African Origin of Civilization), "The Bible states that **Mesraim, son of Ham, brother of Kush and Canaan**, came from **Mesopotamia** (Iran/Iraq) to settle along with his children along the banks of the Nile ... Ham, Canaan and Kush are **Negroes**, according to the Bible ... Loudin, the eldest among them personifies the Egyptian proper, 'The Rotou or Romitou of the hierlyphic inscriptions. Anamim represents the great tribe of the Anu who founded **On of the north (Heliopolis)** and **On of the south (Hermont)**." the first **On** is the site of the great African university attended by Moses and researched by Isaac Newton.

■ Continued Next Week

## The Other Side

### Ethnic Pride



by Harold C. Williams

Every race of people should be proud of their ethnic background. For their background dictates the foundation in which they build their future as a people. Every race should embrace itself and that embracing should not be perceived as anti-anyone. It appears in our society that most cultures overlap. Everybody is part Italian, part French, part Indian, but no one wants to be part African descent. But everyone wants to copy our natural artistic skills, our refinement to fashion, our sensitivity to the human race. All things which are positive, even our philosophy "Don't worry, be happy," but no one wants to be us. So it is important that we teach our children the importance of their African heritage and the pride of being Black. Teach them to understand the sacrifices that have been made in the past in order that they have basic freedom today. The basic needs that they receive are taken for granted. For it appears that this generation of Black youths don't

understand the historical sacrifices that have been made for them to go into restaurants, to work in a grocery store, to attend the best schools and to dream the impossible dream. Many people suffered and died for us to have ethnic pride. No child of African descent should ever be allowed to doubt or be ashamed of their ethnic heritage. For none is greater than those of African descent. For many have gone before and made the statement. In their lives that Black people can handle the difficulties of life with ease, but the impossible takes a little bit longer. And the impossible is the baton that has been passed to the next generation. Ethnic pride is our trophy, respect of African descent is our will. Our will is our tomorrow. Our tomorrow is our demand for respect as a people. We must state to our youth that when someone says they are part Italian, part French, part Indian, stand up and say I am all African descent and be proud. For we are somebody.

## Strength Through Cultural Diversity

by Professor McKinley Burt

That was the title of the Pacific Northwest Conference sponsored by Region 6 of the United States Forest Service. The meeting was held Oct. 31 through Nov. 4 at the Rippling River Resort, Welches, Oregon.

Participation was region wide (375), many coming in by chartered plane. Additionally, there were presenters and facilitators from other parts of the nation; the Washington D.C. headquarters of the huge federal agency was represented by Mr. Jettie Wilds, Director of the Office of Management Planning and Analysis and by Ms. Betty Culmer of the Civil Rights Office. Mr. Wilds is a former Director of Civil Rights for Region 6.

A keynote speaker, familiar to all of us was professor Derrick Bell, former dean of the law school at the University of Oregon and now at Harvard University. His topic was 'The Trouble With Affirmative Action.' The presentations, structure and organization of this conference topped any I have experienced in fifteen years of contractual relationship with the Forest Service. Much credit is due Ms. Lynn Roberts, Director of Civil Rights for this region. She and her staff deserve the very best commendation for successfully carrying out a task that can mean so much for minorities and women in the agency's work force.

My presentation—**Minorities In The Northwest**—dealt with action and with the realities of establishing a minority interface between the huge federal agency, the community, and the education establishment. I cited my successful activities of the 1970s and called for both new, innovative concepts, and for revitalization of earlier success modes.

The following history and 'Statement of Mission' will give

the reader a sense of the work and commitment that went into this conference:

The Pacific Northwest Strength Through Cultural Diversity Conference is the result of an Oct. 20, 1987 recommendation to the Regional Forester by the members of the Minority Employment Work Group. This Task Force examined a variety of issues pertaining to ethnic employees within the Region and felt that a conference of this type would be beneficial. The primary objective of the conference is to increase Region and Station-wide awareness of and commitment to the value of a diverse work force. In line with this objective, the conference provides a forum for ethnic employees to discuss and explore the development of networks and strategies for advancing the talents and skills of a diverse workforce, the enhancement and developmental opportunities for minority participation in Forest Service management, and the identification, enhancement, and development of the benefits and contributions that a diverse ethnic workforce provides. Incorporating management participation and attendance at this conference is vital to meeting this objective.

I am sure that we all agree with the message from the Chief of the Forest Service, Mr. F. Dale Robertson (at one time supervisor of the Mt. Hood Forest): "It is vital that we combine our energies toward increased understanding and better application of our ideals with respect to cultural diversity."

I would not close without a mention of the **Cultural Presentations** interspersed throughout the conference. Included were our very own Jefferson High School Acting Ensemble, The Warm Springs Indian Dancers, and a West Indian group.

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