

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## Along the Color Line

### Why American Democracy Has Failed

by Dr. Manning Marable

Last month, the House of Representatives approved a reduction in the capital gains tax rate, giving President Bush a major legislative victory over Congressional Democrats. The bill would lower the top capital gains tax rate to 19.6 percent, from 33 percent. It would apply to all income from sales of stocks, real estate, and bonds. In effect, the wealthiest Americans, those earning over \$200,000 annually, will receive 60 percent of the total tax benefits, about \$25,000 per taxpayer. Americans earning above \$100,000 would receive 80 percent of the benefits. This bill, an undisputed version of welfare for the rich, was praised by Bush's Treasury Secretary Nicholas F. Brady, for "strengthening America's economy, creating new jobs and giving American's small businesses and entrepreneurs a fair chance to compete internationally." Even during the high tide of Reaganism, it would be hard to imagine a more naked, aggressive and vicious assault against working class, middle income and poor people. Although the status of the capital gains tax bill remains in doubt, the fact remains that one third of the Congressional Democrats abandoned their leadership. The vote reveals that a solid Congressional majority still exists which blindly follows the economic dogma characteristic of Reaganism. The rationale that cutting taxes to the wealthy will provide jobs to the poor is only a crude scheme for expanding poverty. The philosophy behind this vote is that the government has no obligation to any significant segment of society except the economic ruling class. When working people witness this unvarnished grab for profits, the question arises: "What are the real values which inform the policies of America's political system?" Let us reflect upon the actual uses and abuses of power within the current political process. But to do so, we must take the perspective not of the privileged elites whose pockets will

sag from this tax cut, but from the increasingly marginalized sectors of the middle and working classes.

American democracy has failed because of its institutionalized tendency to ignore the long-term sufferings of millions of American people, the homeless, the poor, people of color and working people. When the powerful and the privileged make demands, both parties listen and respond. Where is the political party which represents the material interests of the majority of us, the women and men who work everyday, who make the goods and provide the services? When Latinos and African-Americans call for prompt action against racism, poverty and inferior education, Bush is blind and the vast majority of Congress is deaf.

American democracy has failed because the political system and the power elite of this country would rather have the omnipresent threat of nuclear war rather than make earnest efforts to build upon the peace initiatives of the Soviet Union. Days ago, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger declared "for all its risks and uncertainties, the cold war was characterized by a remarkably stable and predictable set of relations among the great powers." In short, why does the Bush administration despise Gorbachev, and why is it nostalgic for the Cold War? Gorbachev has the political courage to transcend the military stalemate and nuclear terror of four decades, but Bush has no comparable vision. His advisers recognize that to close the door on the Cold War would mean an inevitable reduction in the billions allocated to the Pentagon. It would deny the powerful a crucial tool which has been used to structure national policies in favor of private profits and against human needs.

Our challenge is to create a new definition of democracy, a majoritarian agenda of jobs, peace and justice. What's at stake is the future of democracy itself.

## Vantage Point



by Ron Daniels

### Winning The Fight Against Racism In America

The last decade has witnessed an ominous resurgence of racism in America. The climate created by Reagan, Reaganomics and Reaganism shaped a fertile environment for the raw face of individual and institutional racism to resurface with ugly and painful consequences. In the final analysis, however, I have contended that the most recent upsurge in overt racism is merely symptomatic of deep seated maladies in American culture, and the character of America's economic and political institutions. As we contemplate the struggle to end racism we must be careful to avoid simply striking out at the symptoms. The fight against racism must eradicate the basic underpinnings of this anti-human and infectious disease in our society.

African-Americans as the principal object, target and victims of racism must, out of a necessity to survive, lead the struggle to overcome the various causes of racism. First and foremost our survival and development requires that we constantly seek to counteract the devastating impact of racism and cultural aggression on our own people. African-Americans cannot accept or yield to the notion of their inferiority to other races, ethnic groups or nationalities.

Black self-hatred is one of the most devastating effects of centuries of racist oppression, and cultural aggression. Self-hatred is engendered and perpetuated by a culture and educational system that still largely glorifies the history and culture of Europe, and white America while minimizing or denying the culture and history of Africa and Africans in America. As African-Americans we have a responsibility to teach ourselves about ourselves and to promote an ideology of racial solidarity and racial development. Give the history and legacy of racism in America. African-Americans must be ever vigilant against racism and unapologetic about the necessity and responsibility to protect and promote our interests.

Racism in America however is not an African-American problem. Racism is an American problem. It is rooted in the culture and the institutions of this nation, and the fight against racism must aim to do no less than erase it from America's culture, its institutions and the American character. African-American studies at all levels within the educational system as a critical and indispensable component of a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-national and multi-lingual educational process in America. African-Americans should not tolerate the perpetration of an educational process which is Euro-centric, white oriented and ignores the contribution to America and the world of Africans,

Native-Americans, Latinos, Arabs, Asians and other peoples of color. America must come to terms with the need to relate to the majority of the peoples of the world. In that context the concept of "English only" is irrational and totally unacceptable. It is like a national death wish for a minority in the world to seek to impose its cultures and languages on the majority of the world. African-Americans must fight for an America which appreciates and respects the rich diversity of peoples and culture in America and the world. A crucial place to begin is by instituting a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-national and multi-lingual educational process in this nation.

Of equal importance is the understanding that the struggle against racism is everybody's fight. It is not exclusively a African-American responsibility. Hence African-Americans must seek to unite all people-Black, White, Brown, Yellow, Red who are willing to step forward to resist racism. Though the culture and institutions of America make it virtually impossible for most white people not to function with some prejudices and racist attitudes, we must not make the mistake of discounting those white Americans who are consciously struggling to rid themselves and America of the disease of racism. Our strategy and tactics therefore must not treat white people as if they are monolithic. Both in principle and as a practical matter it makes sense for white Americans to confront other white Americans as we collectively seek to win the fight against racism.

African-Americans, as we lead the fight, must create an environment which is conducive to forging the greatest possible combination of forces committed to ending racism without sacrificing our own dignity, self-respect and right to self determination.

Finally, it would seem to follow that African-Americans must unite and lead the broadest possible coalition of forces willing to challenge an ideology and system which fosters and tolerates racism, racial oppression, and whose power elite (the rich and the super-rich) has historically used racism as a tool to divide, conquer and exploit working people and people of color when opportune and convenient. The American system breeds racism and economic exploitation at home and abroad. A decisive fight against racism therefore, must ultimately seek to transform America and create a new society; a new society based on respect for racial and cultural pluralism, human priorities and the principles of genuine political and economic democracy; a society where the exploitation of human beings by other human beings is unacceptable.

## Civil Rights Journal

### Race Violence Against Asian Americans

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

It is most unfortunate that it often takes the tragic death of a human being before this society pauses to question why it is that racially-motivated violence continues to be common place against racial and ethnic communities throughout the nation. Now the recent brutal murder of Jim Meng Hai Loo in Raleigh, North Carolina is but the latest in a series of racial attacks on Asian Americans which appear to be increasing.

Loo was a young man of the Chinese American community. He was misidentified by white male assailants who thought Loo was of the Vietnamese American community. According to a detailed account in the local *News and Observer* newspaper, the attack took place in a pool room when a group of white men began name calling and harassing Loo and four other Asian Americans. Two of the white men who are brothers, Robert Piche and Lloyd Piche falsely accused Loo of being responsible for American deaths in the Viet Nam war. Loo and his friends immediately left the pool room and the Piche brothers followed them outside and a fierce racial attack began.

Eye witnesses to the incident have stated that, Robert Piche got a shotgun and a pistol from his truck and brutally struck Loo on the head which later proved to be a fatal blow. It seems as though the Piche brothers were enraged because of their anger toward the Vietnamese community because one of their brothers

died in the Viet Nam war. Although the Viet Nam war is officially over, in too many American's minds the shame, guilt and anger about this war continues. Racism historically has been the vehicle or the crucible in which the manifestation of hate and racial bigotry thrive. Ms. Christina Davis-McCoy, a member of North Carolinians Against Racist and Religious Violence, state "We need to name this death for what it was, racially motivated, and as a community come to terms with this racism."

This case is another tragic reminder of how deadly racism is in our society. We all well remember how in Stockton, California five Asian American students were killed and twenty-nine others were wounded when a young white man angered against Asian Americans opened fire with an AK-47 semi-automatic assault rifle. We also should not allow ourselves to forget Vincent Chin in Detroit, Michigan who was brutally beaten to death by whites wielding a baseball bat because they thought he was responsible for the Japanese intrusion into the U.S. auto industry. Justice must be demanded in the Loo case as well as in all such incidents. This society cannot afford and should not tolerate this kind of brutality. The African American community must be vocal in solidarity with the Asian American community. No act of racist violence against any human being should go unchallenged.

## Conscience Is The Issue

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

On the afternoon of Wednesday, October 4 Mobutu Sese Seko, the self-appointed president for life of Zaire (the Central African Country which used to be known as the Congo) addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations. I led a march of 150 people from Harlem to the UN to deliver a message to this fascist dictator: KEEP OUT OF HARLEM! The Black community doesn't want fascist murderers like you in our neighborhood!

After the march, which traced the route taken 28 years ago when the African American community stormed the UN to protest the CIA-orchestrated assassination of Patrice Lumumba, five of us entered the visitors' gallery of the General Assembly. When Mobutu began speaking, we stood up and shouted: "Mobutu is a murderer! Long live the spirit of Patrice Lumumba and the Congolese people!" Security guards soon escorted us out; we were brought down to the basement of the UN, where we were held for an hour and then released. For a few moments, we had held this tyrant up to the world; scrutiny. No person of conscience can defend his right to speak without, at the same time exercising her or his right to speak out about his crimes against African humanity.

NAP and I have been accused of being "disruptive." "Everything was going so smoothly until NAP got here," they complain. I am proud to say that it's true! We are not prepared to let Mobutu's visit go smoothly. We are not going to listen politely while this murderer of African children, this monster of greed whose colossal wealth was acquired on the backs of the Congolese people, tries to foist himself on the world as a peacemaker and a statesman. The issue is conscience. Unlike the Democratic Party, NAP won't compromise with the likes of Mobutu Sese Seko. We will not tolerate this insult to the Black community! We will not allow him to set a foot into Harlem!

No, NAP will not be silent. We will keep doing what we are doing--what we have always done--so that the voice of the working class gets LOUDER AND LOUDER, and the Black-led independent political movement gets bigger and bigger, until we are able to kick Mobutu not only out of Harlem, but out of New York, and out of the Congo!

I am using my independent mayoral candidacy to support David Dinkins, the Democratic Party nominee, for mayor of New York City. I believe that an African American reformer such as

Mr. Dinkins will make a better mayor by far for all the people of our city than the right wing, anti-Semitic and white supremacist cop masquerading as a choir boy who is running against him. But David Dinkins wouldn't be caught dead marching with us against Mobutu, or demonstrating at the United Nations to protest the presence of this vicious abuser of human rights, this ally of apartheid, this assassin of Patrice Lumumba. Dinkins and the Democrats won't fight for the people of New York. They're afraid to.

NAP isn't! The New Alliance Party is on the ballot, and in the streets, to give our people a voice in the upcoming election and beyond. We are doing what we always do--making it possible for the Black and Puerto Rican-led working class voice to make itself heard. The Democrats, including the reformers, won't do it--and that's exactly how the Mobutu Sese Sekos of the world are allowed to get away with murder.

In the weeks before the primary, I led a doggin' Dinkins team which followed David everywhere he went. There was David, saying the acceptable-to-the-Powers That Be things Democratic Party candidates are supposed to say. And there I was, demanding--through a bullhorn--that he address the issues of concern to the city's working class communities.

A young Black man, a graduate student at the City University of New York, recently said to me, "Dr. Fulani, what you're saying is so important. Isn't there a way you could do it less 'offensively'?" Because I want more people to hear you, and to like you." The answer is no--there's no "nice" way to talk about poverty, police brutality and racial violence. These are issues of conscience. And the Powers That Be, who have no conscience, definitely don't like anyone to talk about them.

Since the primary more and more people throughout the city have been coming up to me on the street to express their appreciation for what I am doing. They're saying, "I know how hard it is for you to bring us in..." It is hard to run down the street after Dinkins. It is hard to stand up at a Democratic Party event where everyone is on their "best behavior" and make the kinds of "embarrassing" statements that provoke the outrage of the hacks and the hypocrites. But conscience is the issue. Because it's so much harder to stand on a line at the welfare office knowing that whatever they decide to give you won't be enough to feed your children this month. It's infinitely harder to be the mother of a child lying dead on the street because he committed the crime of being black in white America.

## Letter To The Editor

October 9, 1989

To the editor:

I have never taken the time to express my appreciation for the weekly publication that you and your staff so diligently provide for our community and for us as individuals. The fact that the issues are so readily available, makes it a pleasure to obtain, even when you don't have the funds available to purchase one.

I have on, several occasions, physically visited your facilities when you were located on N. Killingsworth near Denver, just to pick up your latest issue and was always told, "Help yourself". At times they were all gone. I'm sure this little ritual has been exercised by many. However I'm wondering how many others felt as I did, when I came to what I knew to be your present facility? I found 'someone else' there.

I was informed that you had taken headquarters elsewhere. Well, I found 'elsewhere' and am pleased that you are being housed at a new facility, where I can once again pick up my weekly fix on community news and other informative articles.

I had never given any particular thought about the Observer in terms of being or not being. After all, I've only been an avid fan for approximately eighteen (18) years.

My point is: please keep the issues coming! You've become a tradition, especially for our area.

Best wishes,  
Martha Ollison

## PORTLAND OBSERVER

### OREGON LOTTERY SPORTS ACTION OFFICIAL PROGRAM

Pacific Time	Selection		Underdog Point Spread*
Sun 10/16	FAVORITE	UNDERDOG	
10:00am	1 CHICAGO	2 Houston	+8
10:00am	3 NEW JERSEY	4 Washington	+8
10:00am	5 CINCINNATI	6 Miami	+8
10:00am	7 ATLANTA	8 New England	+2
10:00am	9 MINNESOTA	10 Green Bay	+7
10:00am	11 San Francisco	12 DALLAS	+14
10:00am	13 TAMPA	14 Detroit	+7
1:00pm	15 Philadelphia	16 PHOENIX	+6
1:00pm	17 CLEVELAND	18 Pittsburgh	+11
1:00pm	19 NEW ORLEANS	20 New York	+7
1:00pm	21 Seattle	22 SAN DIEGO	+1
1:00pm	23 LOS ANGELES	24 KANSAS CITY	+5
Mon 10/16			
6:00pm	27 Anaheim	28 BUFFALO	+4

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