

# EDITORIAL / OPINION



## Perspectives



### To Your Good Health -- From Africa

by Professor McKinley Burt

From the first dynasty onward Egypt had a system of medicine more rational than the world was again to see for over three thousand years. Egyptian physicians, famous as teachers, visited and taught in Arabia, Persia, the Greece. Hippocrates, grandfather of the great physician by that name, was the pupil of an Egyptian. Medical knowledge in Greece, fused with Egyptian teaching, was handed down from father to son as a family heritage. In this way Egyptian medicine became the groundwork for Greek medicine as given to us by Hippocrates.

#### Atkinson's Magic, Myth and Medicine

This noted medical historian, Atkinson, goes back 7,000 years to describe a region that included Ethiopia and Nubia as well as Egypt proper. He leaves no doubt that "Africa is the birthplace of medical science," but his testimony is only an overview of testimony and documentation which has been preserved and forwarded through the ages. These records illuminate the role of the first teachers of a science that has enabled mankind to persevere in his little ecological niche all these millenniums, surviving plagues, pestilence and daily affronts to his physical well-being.

It is fascinating to examine copies of ancient African papyri obtained from the principal museums of the world--prescriptions and medical procedures from the papyri 'Ebers, Berlin, Leyden, Edwin Smith, Ahmose, etc. Some read with an almost contemporary flair, "Take two capsules and call me tomorrow" (wonder if they had golf courses back then?). Equally interesting is the genius of the African in administrative organization, demonstrated here in medicine as fully as in law, diplomacy, the military, and in navigation and tax codes. There were medical associations that supervised training, certified practitioners, and monitored the practice. There was a great deal of specialization, internists, ocular (with emphasis on cataracts), Podiatrists, brain surgeons, dentists, masseuses, and others; Many were women.

A very informative text on the subject is "The Physicians of Pharonic Egypt," by Paul Ghalioungui; (1983). He furnishes on page 43 a chart showing the titles given physicians over a 4,000 year period, B.C. The following titles are examples: Physician of the King, Chief of Physicians of the King, Inspector of the Physicians of the King, Chief of the Physicians of the King's Wife, Master of the Physicians of the Lord of the Two Countries (The president of the United States never had it so good). Now, these were just Royal physicians, there were also lay physicians for the masses. Interesting and somewhat humorous are the titles of some of the specialties: Physician of the Belly, Shepherd of the Anus, Interpreter of the Liquids Hidden in the body, Operator of the Tooth and So Forth. These were all rungs on a ladder that could be climbed on "sheer personal merit" without support from family or inheritance.

The greatest of Egyptian physicians, in fact the greatest in all the ancient world, was Imhotep, also the designer and builder of the Step Pyramid. So great were his abilities and reputation that thousands of years later he was deified by the Greeks and in their usual manner they placed him in their pantheon of gods as Aesculapius. As

Atkinson tells us Egyptian medicine became the groundwork and principal basis for Greek medicine. It is believed that the Greek, Hippocrates (after whom the famed oath is named) studied at the same African Temple Schools which Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras and others studied; "it is not known how else he managed to gain such a vast knowledge of diagnosis and treatment." Equally revealing is the background of the Caduceus, that universal medical symbol. It is not Greek at all, archaeologists having found it as early on as 7,000 years ago in Ethiopia, Nubia, and across the Red Sea in Punt (Arabia). "the sign which precedes our medical prescriptions is derived from the eye of Horus," the same eye over the truncated pyramid which is incorporated into the Great Seal of the United States.

There is a chapter "Egyptian Physicians Abroad" in the book by Ghalioungui. Not only is this material important to our understanding of the worldwide dispersion and preeminence of African science in ancient times, but equal stature is evident in the areas of international relations and trade. Here is a significant instance. In a letter to the Egyptian King, Niqmad of Ugarit (Iraq-Asia), requests, "My Lord would you send two Nubian pages and a palace physician. We have no physicians here." In 2000 B.C. was Boghazkoy, 50 miles east of Ankara (Turkey), where archives uncovered have revealed intense diplomatic activity between Egypt and the great powers of the Near East: Assyria, Babylon, Syria and Mesopotamia, a comical exchange of letters occurs when Pharaoh Rameses II tries to diplomatically explain to a Hittite ruler that he cannot furnish a drug which will enable a 60 year old woman to conceive.

There is much errata that could be included here but space does not permit. For instance, there were Coroner's offices which certified accidents and performed autopsies. There were veterinarians and pharmacists who made up and dispensed drugs. Special medical personnel was assigned to ships and military expeditions. All in all these were magnificent contributions which like the rest of African contribution has been deliberately expunged from establishment history.

## VANTAGE POINT

### Articles and Essays by Ron Daniels Maulana Karenga, Creator of Kwanzaa

From December 26 through Jan. 1, a sizeable segment of the population of Africans in America will be celebrating Kwanzaa, the African-American holiday which focuses on the Black family, community and culture. In a little more than two decades Kwanzaa has grown from a relatively obscure celebration to a major holiday which is observed by increasing numbers of Africans in America each year. The spread of Kwanzaa is a triumph for afro-centricity, a victory for nationalist theory and practice and above all a tribute to the genius and perseverance of its creator, Dr. Maulana Karenga.

Kwanzaa stands as a living legacy of the Black consciousness movement of the sixties and seventies. At the heart of that movement was the quest to redefine ourselves as a people and to restructure our relationship to Africa, America and the world based on our own empowerment and self-determination. During this tumultuous and productive period, Karenga emerged as one of the most innovative and systematic theorist and proponents of Black Nationalism of all time. His creation and projection of Kwanzaa has already insured his place in history.

Though it is Kwanzaa which people take note of as Karenga's greatest achievement, Kwanzaa in fact is based on and is an outgrowth of Kawaia. Kawaia is Karenga's major contribution to nationalist theory. Through Kawaia Karenga establishes an afro-centric ideological framework for African-American development. This "doctrine of tradition and reason" derives its basic principles and values from tradition African societies but adapts or translates these principles and values into a set of functional ideas and concepts which are relevant for contemporary African-American life.

Contending that the "key crisis in Black life is the cultural crisis" Karenga elaborated a simple but profound set of values called the Nguzo Saba, the Seven Principles of the Black Value System, as the foundation of Kawaia: Umoja - Unity; Kujichagulia - Self-Determination; Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics; Ujima - Collective Work and Responsibility; Nia - Purpose; Kuumba - Creativity; and Imani - Faith. The religious practice of these seven principles and values, Karenga argues would greatly accelerate the rescue and restoration of Africans in America and throughout the pan-African world.

Dr. Maulana Karenga conceived Kwanzaa as a concrete manifestation of the vision and values of Kawaia. Observing that

most traditional African societies have some form of celebration to mark the conclusion of the harvest season, Karenga developed the Kwanzaa celebration around this practice. Consistent with the doctrine of tradition and reason, however, the emphasis for Kwanzaa is on the collective energies, work, achievements and productivity of the family, community, nation and race during the year.

Hence Karenga positioned Kwanzaa at the end of the year (Dec. 26 - Jan. 1) to provide an opportunity for African-American families and communities to reflect on the distant and immediate past, celebrate the harvest of accomplishments, contemplate our future, and recommit ourselves to a set of afro-centric principles and values designed to strengthen the race. Each day of Kwanzaa, therefore, is based on one of the principles of the Nguzo Saba; Unity, Self-Determination, Cooperative Economic, Collective Work and Responsibility, Purpose, Creativity and Faith.

Operating from his base with the U.S. Organization which he founded in Los Angeles in 1965, Karenga vigorously propagated the notion of Kwanzaa within the nationalist community and throughout the Black Nation in general. The celebration immediately took hold among a multitude of nationalist organizations throughout the country who in turn began to root the celebration of Kwanzaa in the broader African-American community.

Karenga's persistent teaching, preaching, and organizing coupled with the determination of nationalists to institutionalize Kwanzaa is bearing a tremendous harvest. Where one could hardly find information about Kwanzaa just a decade ago, now Ebony, Jet, Essence, B.E.T. the National Association of Black Newspaper Publishers and even the white press carry major features about Kwanzaa. Kwanzaa is growing.

The emergence of Kwanzaa is all the more remarkable since, unlike the Martin Luther King National Holiday, Kwanzaa has never had the stamp of approval of America's ruling elite, or the U.S. government. The growth and development of Kwanzaa represents a sheer act of will and self-determination by the African-American nation. Karenga conceived it, and we are achieving it. Indeed it is time that we give recognition to the legacy of a gifted theoretician, prolific lecturer, writer and talented organizer who still lives among us--Dr. Maulana Karenga, the creator of Kwanzaa.

## THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

We stand at the beginning not just of a new year, but of a new decade--and on the brink of a new century! These are very thrilling times, full of promise for a better world. They're dangerous times, too: the people's movement for democracy that spilled out into the streets of eastern Europe and China in 1989 was paid for in blood; and there are those whose only interest in the struggle against corruption is to exploit it for their own, anti-democratic purpose. But hope is in the air; walls and crumbling; change is on the way!

Peoples and nations who have been among the world's forgotten "poor relations" and Black sheep are building new alliances with one another so that when they sit down at the table now with the "Great Powers" they can bargain from a position of strength. It is high time to build such new, independent alliances here in the United States--between the community and rank and file labor; between students and

the elderly; between Blacks and gays--between and among all of those who, year in and year out, are excluded from the wheeling and dealing that passes for politics in America.

As the chairperson of the Black-led, multi-racial New Alliance Party, I am committed to making the '90s the decade of independent politics. We began in 1988, with my independent Presidential run. For the first time in the history of this country, an African-American woman was on the ballot in every state. For the first time, every voter in America from Alaska to Hawaii and all points in between had the opportunity to pull the lever for an independent candidate who stood--and stands--for the Black Agenda for social and economic justice, for peace instead of war, for people instead of profits. On Election Day, 1988 2% of the nation's African-American voters rebelled against the Black political establishment by enlisting in my crusade for fair elections and democracy.

That rebellion at the polls was re-enacted one year later in the South Bronx, where 42% of the Black and Puerto Rican working class voters in the 11th Councilmanic District defied the notoriously corrupt Democratic Party machine to pull the lever for the grassroots Puerto Rican leader--Pedro Espada--who ran for City Council on the independent NAP line.

1990 is a ballot status year in New York State. A party whose candidate gets 50,000 votes in the gubernatorial election thereby secures a permanent place on the ballot--a crucial weapon in the fight for fair elections. NAP has been seeking permanent ballot status in New York since 1982, when we got 5,000 votes. Four years later I ran for Governor--the first Black woman in New York ever to do so--and received 25,000 votes. 1990 will be our third try for ballot status in New York, where there has not been a progressive independent party on the ballot for many, many years. A ballot status victory for NAP in New York would make a very significant political statement to the entire country--one which would have enormous impact in 1992, when the first Presidential race of the new decade takes place.

If we do our work well over the next ten years, by January 1, 2000 we will be able to celebrate something truly wonderful: a national, Black-led, multi-racial, working class-wide independent party that belongs not to Big Business, not to the banks and the landlords "downtown," but to us. I invite you to roll up your sleeves and join me today.

Happy New Year, dear sisters and brothers. Here's to an independent decade!

## To Be Equal

by John E. Jacob

### Challenge Of A New Decade

It's not just a new year we're entering, but a fresh decade--a truly pivotal one in our history. America's future place in the world will be decided by how it meets the challenges of the 1990s.

One such challenge is the economic challenge of building an infrastructure for an economy capable of competing in the world's markets.

Within a few years, Europe will become a single economic entity, with more people and a larger gross national product than either the U.S. or Japan. And Japan is consolidating its hold on the technologies of the future.

Both Europe and Japan either have in place or are building an infrastructure for the new world economy. That means high speed trains and road systems to carry cargo and people and first-rate schools that train their future workforce in tomorrow's technology.

We're lagging behind. Our roads and bridges are deteriorating rapidly and our schools aren't educating half our children.

That's a legacy of the 1980s, which put private greed above public investments in the physical and human infrastructure. The 1990s will have to be a time of playing catch-up, and doing what our global competitors did while we were partying.

A second challenge of the 1990s will be to construct a global framework for peace. The end of the Cold War and the imminent democratization of vast areas that had been in the grip of dictatorships offers tremendous opportunities.

The most obvious one is the opportunity to redirect our energies from preparing for war to winning the peace. With the Soviet Union calling an armistice in the Cold War, we are without an enemy for the first time in 50 years.

And when you don't have an enemy to fight, you don't need a massive defense

establishment draining the civilian economy. Experts say that the end of the Cold War means the U.S. could have an adequate national security system for about half of what we currently spend on the Pentagon.

That means \$150 billion a year--or some \$1.5 trillion over the decade--could be diverted to cutting the deficit and investing in the human resources we need to make our economy strong.

Part of those savings could be used to meet the third challenge of the 1990s--ending poverty and racial disadvantage in America.

Our national goal should be parity between the races by the year 2000. That will mean not only dismantling the remaining discriminatory barriers in our society, but also investing in programs that help make people independent earners and contributors to a high-tech economy.

Such programs would range from better schools to job programs to meeting the health and housing needs of the poor.

More than four out of five new workers in the 1990s will be African-American, other minorities, and women--the groups traditionally left out in the past. They'll be counted on to help support an aging population, and they can't do that without good jobs at good wages.

So there's a vital economic interest for America to institute policies that close the black-white gap. But there's also a moral interest, as well.

During the demonstrations that led to change in Czechoslovakia last month, the American Declaration of Independence was read aloud--the words "all men are created equal" inspired the revolution that swept through Eastern Europe.

They should now inspire us to finally secure that precious ideal by making the 1990s the decade in which we finally eradicate racism and end the terrible gap that keeps African-Americans from parity.

## Oregon's Minimum Wage Increases

Oregon's minimum wage will increase from \$3.85 an hour to \$4.25 an hour on Jan. 1, the second of three increases approved by the 1989 Legislature.

"The first increase came on Sept. 1, when the minimum wage went from \$4.35 to \$3.85 an hour," Commissioner Mary Wendy Roberts of the Bureau of Labor and Industries, noted.

"On Jan. 1, 1990, it will go to \$4.25 an hour," Roberts said. There will be one more increase on Jan. 1, 1991, to \$4.75 an hour. The Bureau enforces Oregon's minimum wage law.

"Because the state rate exceeds the federal rate, employers come under the state law and must pay employees the higher minimum," Roberts said.

The federal minimum wage goes from \$3.35 to \$3.90 an hour next April, then to \$4.25 an hour in April, 1991.

Paul Tiffany, administrator of the Bureau's Wage and Hour Division, reminds employers that federal provisions for a sub-minimum "training wage" for teenagers who have not worked before and a "tip credit" as an offset for the minimum wage do not apply in Oregon.

"The Legislature debated both issues before rejecting a sub-minimum training wage and tip credit," Tiffany noted.

Many of the exemptions from minimum wage have been narrowed or eliminated with passage of the state law. That means more employees are covered by the minimum wage and overtime and working condition provisions, Tiffany noted.

Still exempt are casual agricultural workers, for example people who pick berries

or other crops; youngsters paid piece rate for harvesting; baby sitters and other domestic homeworkers from the state minimum wage but not the federal rate in some cases, and individuals engaged in the range production of livestock.

For additional information, contact the Bureau's Wage and Hour Division or the Technical Assistance Unit.

## Implementation Of New Firearm Laws (HB3470)

On January 1, 1990, one of the toughest gun control laws in the nation goes into effect. The law, passed last session by the Legislature as HB 3470, completely revises Oregon's firearm statutes, adding new public safety provisions without violating constitutional rights of gun owners.

HB 3470 makes great strides in ensuring that guns are kept out of the hands of prohibited persons: criminals and the mentally ill. The new law expands the identification requirements and imposes mandatory criminal history and mental health commitment background checks necessary for purchasing firearms and obtaining concealed handgun licenses. It also lengthens the waiting period on handgun purchases from five to fifteen days, expands the reasons for denying a firearm transaction or issuance of a concealed handgun license, and enhances criminal penalties for firearm related crimes.

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The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from social and national antagonisms when it accords to every person, regardless of race, color, or creed, full human and legal rights. Hating no person, fearing no person, the Black Press strives to help every person in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

## PORTLAND OBSERVER

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN-AMERICAN PUBLICATION  
Established in 1970

Alfred L. Henderson/Publisher

Leon Harris/General Manager

Gary Ann Garnett  
Business Manager

Joyce Washington  
Sales/Marketing Director

PORTLAND OBSERVER  
is published weekly by  
Exie Publishing Company, Inc.  
4747 N.E. M.L.K. Blvd.  
Portland, Oregon 97211  
P.O. Box 3137  
Portland, Oregon 97208

(503) 288-0033 (Office)

Deadlines for all submitted materials:  
Articles: Monday, 5 p.m.; Ads: Tuesday, 5 p.m.

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Subscriptions: \$20.00 per year in the Tri-County area.

The PORTLAND OBSERVER -- Oregon's oldest African-American Publication -- is a member of The National Newspaper Association -- Founded in 1885, The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York.

