

NATIONAL FORUM

Along The Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

The New Color Line:

Part Two of a Two Part Series

In the United States, people of color are frequently classified as "minorities." But dynamics of the new color line are rapidly changing the demographic position of nonwhites, which will create new political realities.

African-Americans are currently the largest single group of people of color. In the 1990 Census, Blacks should exceed 30 million people. Two-thirds of this population is located in only ten states: New York, 2.4 million people (as of 1980); California, 1.8 million; Texas, 1.7 million; Illinois, 1.7 million, followed by Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Louisiana, Michigan and Ohio. Significantly, the most recent growth trends indicate that Black Americans by increasing numbers are returning to the South, especially metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Houston, New Orleans, Charlotte and Birmingham. As of 1988, 56 percent of all African-Americans resided in the South, a gain of nearly 3 million over the 52 percent who lived in the region in 1980. Most of the Black who are moving into the South are younger, in their twenties and thirties; many are white collar professionals and skilled workers. The strongest areas for Black economic growth are also in the Sunbelt, the Southern states, California and the southwest.

Hispanics represent the fastest-growing population within the new color line. In 1980, the Census counted nearly 15 million Cuban-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other citizens of Hispanic descent. By 1990, the Census should count at least 21 million Hispanics. Before the year 2010, less than twenty years, Hispanics will surpass African-Americans as the largest single minority group. Like Black-Americans, the Latino population is heavily concentrated in certain cities and states. Three-fourths of the total Latino population is located in only five states. California had 4.5 million Hispanics as of 1980, followed by Texas with 3 million; New York, 1.7 million; Florida, 900,000; and Illinois, 650,000 Latinos. Like African-Americans, Hispanics have developed a series of political formations which advocate civil rights and empowerment. The League of United Latin American Citizens, established in 1928, and the G.I. Forum, founded in 1948, parallel the N.A.A.C.P. and Urban League as mainstream, liberal organizations. La Raza Unida Party and other local activist formations represent more nationalist-oriented and radical viewpoints.

Asian-Americans represent the most ethnically diverse of the four major groups of people of color. Like Blacks and Hispanics, Asian-Americans have experienced racism and legal discrimination. During World War II, thousands of Japanese-Americans were forced into internment camps and their property was seized. By 1980,



there were 3.3 million Asian-Americans in the U.S. The major groups included the Chinese-Americans, numbering about 800,000; Filipinos, 800,000; Japanese-Americans, 720,000; and Korean-Americans, 380,000.

Native Americans have historically experienced the greatest form of oppression—genocide. They have a unique status among all other people of color, in that the Indian tribes represent unique legal entities, with the power to levy taxes and to regulate the usage of lands. The Indian population is also heavily concentrated geographically, with more than half of the total located in six states: California, with more than 200,000 Indians in 1980; followed in population by Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, North Carolina and Washington state.

What is the significance of these demographic patterns of people of color across the U.S.? Before the end of the 1990s, one third of the entire American labor force will consist of Blacks, Hispanics, and other people of color. By 2000, the majority of California's population will be nonwhite. By 2020, the majorities of many state populations, especially in the Sunbelt, will consist of people of color. Between 2050 and 2070, the majority of the entire U.S. population will be nonwhite. The color line will be transformed. The majority will become a minority; the minorities will be the majority.

The economic significance of this new color line and its demographic transformation by the middle of the twenty first century is fundamental.

For example, when Social Security was established, the ratio of productive workers who contributed to the pension system compared to recipients was seventeen to one. By the end of this decade, the ratio declines to 3 to 1. By 2030, the ratio will be 2 to 1. Increasingly, there will be a retired, leisure class over age 65 which will be almost totally white, subsidized by grow-

ing wage deductions made by an increasingly nonwhite labor force. Keep in mind that the average Black man now dies about one year before age sixty five, and thus before he collects Social Security.

In the 1990s and well into the next century, it will be imperative for Black politicians, community leaders and activists to grasp the significance of these demographic shifts and the rise of the new color line. We must forge a long-term, strategic alliance with the vast majority of these groups of people of color, particularly those populations such as Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans which already stand at the edge of achieving numerical majorities in a number of cities and even states. By a strategic alliance, I do not mean a casual coalition rooted in convenience and narrow self-interests. What is required is a coherent understanding of our collective common interests, economically, socially, educationally, and politically. We all benefit when we increase the number of non-white elected officials, government employees and administrators, who can in turn reallocate resources to our communities. We all benefit when we increase the number of nonwhite elected officials, government employees and administrators, who can in turn reallocate resources to our communities. We all benefit when we reinforce the economic base inside the cities, creating opportunities for minority-owned businesses, cooperatives, and other enterprises. We can all benefit when affirmative action programs are effectively enforced within the public sector. We need to seize upon those areas of commonality and agreement, which speak to the practical, day-to-day necessities of nonwhite working people, and develop a progressive agenda which places the interests of people ahead of private profit. We must mobilize around the color line, reaching to all nonwhites and to those progressive, anti-racist whites who share our vision of democracy, to create a new American society.

Civil Rights Journal

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

American Apartheid in Alabama

Racist apartheid should not be tolerated in South Africa nor in Alabama. We have just recently returned from commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March. Twenty-five years ago, Hosea Williams and John Lewis along with many others were brutally beaten by local and state police officers because they dared to march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama toward Montgomery, the state capitol. The issue then was voting rights for African-Americans who had been systematically excluded from the electoral process in a geographical area that is predominantly African-American. Days later, Martin Luther King, Jr., led the successful march to Montgomery.

When we arrived in Selma a week ago, we were dismayed to find that while some progress toward the fulfillment of political empowerment for the African-American community has been made, the reality is that another form of apartheid has been instituted. In the local schools, a racial tracking system has been in place for over two decades which has excluded thousands of African-American students from having the chance to receive a quality education.

African-American students are disproportionately lodged into the lowest academic "level 3," while white students are disproportionately lodged into the highest academic "level 1." This tracking begins as early as the first and second grades. The method which the schools have administered prevented African-American children from changing their assigned academic level. We interviewed many African-American high school seniors who stated that they were forced to stay in "level 3" the entire twelve years of their education in the Selma school system. As a result, these students were not permitted to take basic algebra or mathematics classes because these subjects are reserved for "level 1" students.

In a school system that is 80 percent African-American, it is a crime against humanity for these students to be tracked away from minimum academic competence. Generations of African-American youth from Selma have been denied entrance into college not because they lack intelligence or ability but directly because of the deliberate racial discrimination they have suffered in the school system.

That is why when Selma's first African-American school superintendent, Dr. Norward Roussell, attempted to change the tracking system, he was fired by the school board. Incidentally, the school board, in a city that is predominantly African-American is comprised of six whites and five African-Americans. The school board is appointed by the predominantly white city council which is controlled by long-time Mayor Joe Smitherman. Mayor Smitherman was the mayor of Selma twenty-five years ago when "Bloody Sunday" occurred across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The school board has determined that six members constitute a quorum and therefore the white members of the school board effectively maintain the racial tracking system.

A renowned psychologist, Dr. Bobby Wright, once said that to systematically destroy or to prevent the development of a person's mind is to commit a form of genocide which he termed "menticide." Twenty-five years ago the issue was the right to vote without racial discrimination and intimidation. Today the issue in Selma, Alabama is the right to education without racial tracking, discrimination and intimidation.

The children of Selma are paying a heavy price. Please do not see this as just a local issue. We are now receiving calls daily from many different communities throughout the country attesting that a similar racial tracking is occurring in their schools. Let the word go out that we shall challenge this form of American apartheid. Yes, a mind is a terrible thing to waste, and we cannot allow the minds of children in Selma or anywhere else to be tracked and destroyed.

THE FINAL CALL

Nation of Islam Leader Stirs Nation's Capitol

WASHINGTON--The Nation's capitol had never seen anything like it before. In just two days, Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, blew into this city like a quiet hurricane, met with the publishers, senior editors and reporters of the two major newspapers as well as the Black press, and left the city - from the White House to the halls of Congress to the college campuses and basketball courts of the Black community - buzzing over his visit.

Just the opposite of the month of March, Minister Farrakhan was in like a lamb and out like a lion, with the words of his visits treated in both papers with deference usually reserved for presidents and prime ministers.

Greeted by Arnaud de Borchgrave, Editor-in-Chief of the Washington Times at their plant on Washington's northeast side on Feb. 27, Minister Farrakhan was taken to Mr. Borchgrave's private office, where he met briefly with Wesley Pruden, managing editor, and Josette Shiner, deputy managing editor, before going to "the Green Room" where 13 other Washington Times staffers were poised for the luncheon session.

The Washington Times, published by the Unification Church of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, has carved a niche for itself in the Washington market since its inception nearly eight years ago.

After a brief opening statement, the Muslim leader fielded a wide range of questions during a lively exchange. Notably absent from both the Times and the Post sessions were religious editors.

A front-page news article in the Feb. 28, Washington Times, "Leader urges Black exodus," gave details of the visit accompanied by extensive direct quotations from the lengthy interview on page eight.

On the following morning, Washington Post publisher Donald Graham, son of owner Katherine Graham, met Minister Farrakhan at the entrance to the Post building and escorted the delegation to the meeting room at the Washington Post Building, around the corner from the White House, where 17 Post staffers had gathered for a breakfast meeting.

Post staffers—including noted columnists William Raspberry, Dorothy Gilliam, David Broder and Richard Cohen, as well as assistant Managing Editor Milton Coleman—again probed the calm Muslim minister. The media alleged that Minister Farrakhan had threatened Coleman's life during the 1984 campaign of Rev. Jesse Jackson when Coleman turned over to a fellow reporter off-the-record statements of Rev. Jackson.

Minister Farrakhan took the opportunity to greet Coleman, and to chastise Post staffers who advised Coleman not to meet with Minister Farrakhan during the controversy, even after the Minister used an ABC Nightline television appearance to discount charges that he had called for Coleman's death.

At times intense, the exchanges were the first face-to-face opportunity for some of the best-known and most widely respected journalists in Washington to hear for themselves the views and proposals of a man the Black community increasingly is hailing as their "leader."

CREED OF THE BLACK PRESS

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. Hatred 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.

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

We Will Defend Our Own!

There is a very valuable lesson to be learned from the election results in Nicaragua. It is that revolutionary struggles in the so-called Third World, regardless of how much popular support they may have, cannot really succeed unless and until there is fundamental social change here. Why? For the plain and simple reason that white corporate America won't allow it.

That is why black-led independent politics is so significant. Those of us who are committed to this new brand of progressive politics are shaping the social motion boiling up in the streets of America into a multi-racial, working class-wide movement that is already causing the profoundly corrupt and anti-democratic political establishment to panic. A case in point: the kangaroo court proceedings that have been mounted against Reverend Al Sharpton for the "crime" of having stood up to defend Tawana Brawley, a 15-year old Black child no one else would listen to when she said she had been gang-raped.

Reverend Sharpton is a dearly loved hero in the working class Black communities of New York who—for that very reason—has been under sustained attack from the state's judicial and political establishment. On March 19 he will be tried in New York City on charges of stealing \$250,000 in charitable funds donated to the National Youth Movement, an organization which he founded when he himself was only 16. A related trial for tax evasion is scheduled to begin in the capital city of Albany, New York on May 1.

"This case has been brought against Reverend Sharpton because the Tawana Brawley matter was never resolved and the attorney general and the governor of this state, who has Presidential ambitions, were publicly embarrassed," charges Reverend Sharpton's attorney Al-

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ton Maddox, who also stood up with the Brawley family and thereby incurred the wrath of those same powers that be who hate Reverend Al; they are trying to get Mr. Maddox disbarred.

In the wake of the Brawley case, Governor Cuomo and Attorney General Abrams and their underlings, aided and abetted by the white corporate media, did everything they could to destroy Al Sharpton... just as they and their kind have tried to destroy Minister Louis Farrakhan, another independent Black leader who is a hero to the black masses. The powers that be haven't succeeded in burying Louis Farrakhan. They didn't bury Reverend Sharpton. And when 16 year old Yusuf Hawkins was beaten to death by a mob of white hooligans in the lily-white Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn last August, it was Minister Farrakhan who delivered the service at his funeral; and it was Reverend Al who sat with the Hawkins family while the "responsible" (meaning mealy-mouthed) Black leaders were kept outside with the rest of the politicians... where they belonged.

Reverend Sharpton is eager for the fraud trial to get underway—he promises it will be the biggest trial of the decade! The government, charging Reverend Sharpton with 67 counts of fraud, alleges that this militant defender of Black youth misappropriated donations to the NYM from major corporations including CBS, Coca Cola, Polygram, Warner Communications, from Donald Trump (the big time New York City real estate developer) and from boxing promoter Don King. Mr. Maddox plans to subpoena all these bigwigs to testify for the defense.

He has already subpoenaed New York City Mayor David Dinkins—the lawyer who was hired by the young Reverend Al in 1971 to incorporate the National Youth Movement. David has tried to get the subpoena quashed. "It is said that a lawyer paid to represent a young man would not be eager to come forward and defend his client when he is being charged with irregularities," says Mr. Maddox. "In 1971 Reverend Sharpton paid Mr. Dinkins \$4,000 to incorporate the National Youth Movement. Mr. Dinkins' income was \$20,000 that year; Reverend Sharpton was his biggest fish!"

But now David has other fish to fry; the last thing in the world this dyed-in-the-wool Democrat wants is to be forced, under oath, to tell the truth about Reverend Al. The case itself is a farce, and everyone involved knows it. It is the latest move in the political establishment's effort to silence an outspoken Black leader who is deeply loved and respected in the Black community because he has courageously and steadfastly refused to keep silent about injustice. We are going to see to it that this case backfires; they are about to find out that we will defend our own!