

Handwriting On The Wall

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

In the spring I wrote to businesses throughout New York City on behalf of a committee of community folks, youth and adults, who have been working to provide an opportunity for our young people to make a positive statement through their art -- "tag" art and graffiti art -- while providing them with something to do for the summer. I was asking them to provide us with contributions, materials, wall space and publicity so that our youth could speak! The point was to support and bring public attention to the demands that kids were making for youth services (among the first casualties of the severe budget cutbacks that have closed down everything from pools to schools in our communities) and at the same time to give them the opportunity to develop their creative skills and talents in a constructive and pro-social fashion.

When a local TV station decided to cover us, I thought of Bell's Fashions on 125th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, which has a big wall. I asked the owner, Mr. Malachi Bellamy, if we could use it. He loved the idea and said he would do whatever we wanted. Members of our committee went out to paint stores and asked them to donate paint and supplies. We had a meeting to conceptualize the mural and we were ready to go.

Before we knew it we were at the crossroads of Harlem with the cameras rolling while the muralists filled one wall with a powerful portrait of Malcolm X, the words "Register a Protest" above and "Voter Power" below. Meanwhile, a second wall was being filled with hundreds of colorful and distinctive tags. And through it all, rappers and dancers from the All Stars Talent Show Network -- including MC Browneyes, the winner of this spring's

national finals -- performed on the street and other kids stopped everyone who passed by and asked them to register to vote. Still other kids carried signs that said "Don't kill us for writing on walls" and "Give us jobs and opportunities, not prison."

As you can imagine, it was wild! In the midst of everything else that was going on, a fight broke out between the muralists and the taggers. The muralists, who tend to see themselves as the "real" artists, were upset that some of the taggers were drawing on their mural. One of the muralists came up to me and asked, "What is this, art or politics?" I told him it depends on how you look at it: the fact that cops are killing young people for doing it is very political. Then he asked, "Are you saying that all Black and Latino youth are artists?" My answer to that one was that I don't give a damn. The point is that they deserve to live, whether they're artists or not!

Not very long ago my 14 year old son Amani was arrested for writing his name on a wall. One of the arresting officers told me that they had caught him "armed with magic markers." I walked out of the police station determined to do something about the fact that Black and Latino youth are in danger of losing their lives for no other reason than the fact that they have something to say and very few ways -- or places -- to say it.

Having this happen to Amani was very painful, but very important. I knew that a young Black man named Michael Stewart had been killed by the cops a few years ago because he was tagging a subway wall, but I hadn't realized how widespread the arrest and harassment of these young artists really was. The police are relating to Black

and Latino youth who are hanging out in our communities with nothing to do as potential criminals. It doesn't matter to the cops that they have nothing to do because the most recent round of cutbacks has left our communities with very few recreational facilities and almost no jobs.

Graffiti is one of the few ways these kids have to express themselves, to gain any kind of recognition and fame and to rebel against a society that hates their guts. So they are doing it a lot more. The cops are coming after them in full force, which means a lot more of our young people end up with criminal records. It's a powder keg out there, and the cops are more than willing to light the fuse.

On the day of the 12th Street "happening" a lot of adults came over and asked me what was going on. When I told them, they thanked me. I met a lot of tourists who knew me. There was a woman from Augusta, Georgia who reads this column in the *Augusta Focus*, another woman from Indiana who had seen the column in a Black newspaper there, and someone from Ft. Lauderdale in Florida who had seen me on CNN. It was a very touching and joyous scene. In the midst of it the reporter from Channel 5 turned to me and asked, rather incredulously, "Do you know all these people?"

In a way I do. I am fighting for our children -- not just the talented tenth, but for all of our children. I have read the handwriting on the wall.

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Stop This Lynching

Time is running out for Mumia Abu-Jamal, widely acclaimed Black journalist on death row in Pennsylvania. Abu-Jamal is facing death for what many thoughtful people see as punishment for his outspoken and uncompromising political beliefs. Starting at the age of 13 when he and three companions were beaten and hospitalized by Philadelphia plainclothes and uniformed police after they protested a rally for George Wallace, Abu-Jamal has been an activist for social change. He became a Black Panther at the age of 16, learned journalism writing for the Black Panther Party newspaper, and became the president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists in 1980. Among those he interviewed were the Africas, connected with MOVE. Jamal admired the courage and commitment of MOVE and was one of the very few to state his support publicly. MOVE was later wiped out in the murderous military assault by Philadelphia police in 1985, which killed eleven men, women and children.

In December, 1981, Abu-Jamal intervened when he saw a policeman beating up his brother. There were many people around the scene and a lot of confusion. He was critically wounded; the policeman died. In the trial, witnesses contradicted each other and key eye witnesses were people with charges pending against them. A number of witnesses said they saw another man running away from the scene. Even the star witness, a prostitute with charges pending, gave a description of the assailant that did not fit Jamal. Other witnesses said they did not see the star witness at the scene. The bullets that killed the policeman did not come from Jamal's gun, although the bullet that wounded Jamal came from the policeman's gun. The judge, who was a former head of the policeman's association, permitted into evidence the claim by one officer that Jamal had confessed the crime in the ambulance to the hospital, but another officer who said Jamal had made no statements was on vacation during the trial and did not testify. Another witness

claimed Jamal admitted to shooting the officer in the hospital, but hospital staff said he made no statements but was only groaning with pain as the police beat him in the waiting room.

During the sentencing phase of the trial, the prosecutor argued that Jamal should be condemned to death because of his political beliefs. He referred to Jamal's Black Panther past.

Jamal continued to write columns for newspapers around the country. His campaign has attracted the support of many prominent people, like Ed Asner and Ramsey Clark. His appeals have been supported by the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Conference of Black Lawyers. Over 40,000 people have petitioned for clemency. Let your voice be heard to stop this racist execution. Write to Governor Robert Casey, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Public opinion does make a difference--Angela Davis and others have proved that. To get background materials and petitions, call 281-8540.

Plan Ahead For Health Care Expenses

(NU) - Your tooth aches, but you need every penny you've got, and more, to pay your child's college tuition. So you delay the needed dental work and endure the pain.

You are not alone. A recent survey found that one-third of all consumers delay routine medical or dental care because they lack the cash to pay for the service at the time of the visit. That same survey showed that about two-thirds of this group said they would have used a credit card to pay if they had known this option was available.

A new booklet by Dr. Carolyne K. Davis, a recognized health care expert, details important steps to take when planning for your family's health care:



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Perspectives

By Professor McKinley Burt

Readers Have The Last Word

Don't they always? We always appreciate any reinforcements (or corrections) from the "audience." The Series, "In the Beginning Was The Word," must have gotten instantaneous reactions because I got phone calls this time instead of letters. John B. Altman of S. E. Portland had this to say:

"U.S. News and World Report recently stated, 'A wave of archaeological discoveries is altering old ideas about the roots of Christianity and Judaism--and affirming that the Bible is more accurate than many scholars thought.' According to Mitchell Dahood of the Pontifical Bible Institute; writing in the pages of the respected *Biblical Archaeological Review* (Bimonthly), 'We've got to take the Bible much more seriously as an historical document.'"

Thank you Mr. Altman, I have just become a subscriber to that magazine. I have long held the same view as demonstrated by my long use of such material as I have found it to exactly match the research of scholars from other fields whose documented research is held in high esteem. However, you will find me in active correspondence with the publishers whenever they might avoid a correct attribution of source of an ancient culture or personage (i.e. using the terms "oriental, middle eastern, Semitic," etc.) when the place or

concept is obviously AFRICAN.

Some readers may be aware of a very famous case, that of the book, *They Came Before Columbus*, by famed Black Historian Ivan Van Sertima. Despite meticulous documentation of the presence of African landings in America long before "Christopher Columbus," the author was attacked and belittled by the press despite his impeccable academic credentials. That was fifteen years ago, but today the accuracy of his research is recognized by scholars and institutions all over the world. My point is that this charge of affairs came about because those working in the cause of truth engaged in "active correspondence" with an errant media on a scale that made it impossible for racists to continue to hide the truth.

Another reader was somewhat indignant that I did not detail how much that famed Greek poet "Homer" emphasized the African presence in Greek affairs. Here are some excerpts from an excellent text by Snowden, a Howard University history professor, "Blacks in Antiquity."

"The first Greek poet had heard of Ethiopians. Not only does Homer mention Ethiopians but he describes a well known herald of Odysseus as black-skinned and woolly-haired--Their home is by the 'streams of ocean.'" (p.101)

In the following passage from the chapter, "Ethiopians In Classical My-

thology," most of the personages are black Africans, a fact which most scholars will not mention. "Homer tells us that the Olympians were fond of visiting the Ethiopians. Zeus, followed by all the gods, went to feast with the blameless Ethiopians where he remained for twelve days." (p.144-155) The chapter continues on with descriptions of the Greek and Ethiopian personages who interacted in the affairs of the two nations: "Iris, Poseidon, Ichthyophagi, Cambyzes, Sabacos, Piankhi, Amasis, Seneca, Thespion, Apollonius of Tyana, Bacchus, Memnon, Tithonius, etc."

Oh, how much dishonest scholars have kept from us, hoping that most of us would not have access to "full" translations by researchers of integrity. Snowden and other historians of repute do not hesitate to tell us that "It was black-skinned, woolly-haired Eurybates who accompanied Odysseus on the embassy to Achilles, the companion whom Odysseus esteemed more highly than his other companions because he had a mind like his own." (p.122 ibid)

Thank you, dear readers, for your input and your interest. It not only keeps us on our toes, but adds immeasurably to the data we have available to build our research. We all shall continue to develop the "African perspective" until the full depth of our ancestors' role in civilization is known.

Parent Educator Program to Begin

Parenting and working with young children are skills that need development and nourishment. The OSU Parent Educator program offers parents and professionals training in child development and parenting issues, family theory, group family theory, group facilitation and the "Discipline That Doesn't Hurt!" and Footsteps series. Volunteer parents are needed to lead discussion groups for parents

whose children are ten and younger. Professionals working with parents need current information and training pertinent to the issues concerning their clients. Dr. Linda Ladd is the director of the Parent Educator training which runs for four days (28 hours) in all three metro counties beginning in September. Orientation for the Parent Educator program will be held at the OSU Extension offices in Clackamas,

Washington, and Multnomah counties beginning in late August. Cost for materials is \$30. Volunteers will pay back training by working with parent groups in each county. Professionals will deliver materials and training back to their own programs. For orientation and training dates or program information, call Annette Fetters at 254-1500.

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Reinvestments in the Community

OPINION

by Dr. Jamil Cherovee

Education

While in Alabama, I was invited to speak at Chappie James Hall. The students insisted that I cut the lecture short, that they may have more time to ask questions.

Education is no better than the philosophy that guides it. And since the world is based on exaltation of caucasians, the philosophical underpinnings of every discipline is to support the basic premise that caucasoids are superior to Blacks ... This poison permeates every discipline. Therefore, education must be "re-examined." Since Black people have been mis-educated under a system of caucasoid supremacy, Blacks need to be retrained so we may be of service to our people and to ourselves and humanity.

During slavery, Blacks were deprived of the right to know, which made them able to be used as "a tool and a slave," and which has caused us to reject our own teachers. We accept tutelage from caucasoid scholars and thinkers from the past without judging it for its real value. Today's education should teach us to think, to analyze, to critique.

Our students must perfect what they are studying, rather than accepting it as it is. Black students should not be a slave to yesterday's knowledge.

I applaud Washington's call for technical and agricultural training. Farming is the engine of life itself. Delving into and comparing the principles of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, and Marcus Garvey, I attempted to show how today a synthesis of these great thinker's programs was needed.

Before ending my lecture, I scrutinized the role of woman in society, and the proper relationship and respect that should exist between man and woman. The Supreme Architect (God) of the Universe did not create you (woman) to be a plaything for men. Instead, woman is actually a co-creator with God, and through a woman will come men and women who will bring about heaven on earth. When a woman has thoughts of rejecting the child during pregnancy, those thoughts affect the development of that child. That's why you have produced children today that hate

themselves and are prone to suicide, because you rejected it while it was in the womb, and you wished it dead ... so you have created children that will murder you today-cold and heartless. We must lift up the honor of our women, if we want to make a better world, that better world is coming from the womb of a woman. This is definitely needed around this nation, particularly the aspect of bringing up the Black male to a certain level of consciousness so he knows how to treat the Black woman.

An impromptu question and answer session was arranged on the next day at the Alumni House where students were able to pose questions to me in an informal setting. The level of questioning, was impressive. I told the students I felt confident in our future after hearing their probing questions.

Hand shakes and hugs was an emotional moment, a fitting conclusion to this historic visit to the lands once trod by the great institution builder, Booker T. Washington



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