

Poorly Performing Schools Will Not Be Improved Without Increased Funding

DR. WILBERT J. LEMELLE
President of Phelps-Stokes Fund

"Although better by a wide margin than it was some three or four decades ago, by nearly all objective measures the status of blacks relative to whites has stagnated or regressed since the 1970s." This was how Gerald Jaynes, Study Director for "A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society," summarized his investigation of the state of urban schools and their impact on African American children to the Subcommittee on Select Education two years ago. Among the factors contributing to the disparity between the educational achievement of blacks and whites are differences in content and organization of school instruction and teacher expectation. But at the root of the problem is money. Another witness, Dr. Wormie Reed, Director of the Trotter Institute of Black Culture at the University of Massachusetts, joined Dr. Jaynes in the recognition that fiscal inequity is a major reason for educational disadvantage.

It is now two years later. On September 31 of this year, the National Education Goals Panel issued a report assessing progress toward meeting educational goals of President Bush's much touted plan for school reform, America 2000. The report concluded that at the rate the nation's educational system is going it cannot possibly reach these goals.

One reason the goals remain unattainable is the failure of the government's strategy to address the fact that the majority of America's children are served by public school systems whose budgets, even before the recession, have been cut to the point where it is impos-

sible to maintain even basic operations. Students in these inadequately financed schools are, for the most part, the poor, the disabled, and disadvantaged minorities. Schools and students cannot be expected to meet the standards set forth in America 2000 when their resources are reduced to the level of underdeveloped countries.

If American students are to meet what the government's plan calls "world class standards" the federal government must see to it that every American student attends a "world class school." At present the majority of African American students attend sub-standard schools, which are struggling under multiple handicaps. Help can only come if the federal government adopts a strategy for emergency action.

But the traditional mission of federal assistance has been abandoned by the Administration. America 2000 sets educational goals such as national standards, tests, and new kinds of school, but according to the newly established National Citizens Commission for African American Education, it fails to urge emergency relief for those schools most in need. Unless this is done the Administration's strategies for educational improvement risk becoming no more than public relations ploys. The first communicate on education policy issued by the Commission calls on the congressional Black Caucus to prepare a Master-Plan for the Improvement of Education in America and specifies minimum emergency actions to be taken.

In the current fiscal year, 1992, one billion dollars must be appropriated and distributed to the one hundred poorest congressional districts for laboratory equipment, typewriters, comput-

ers, book, instructional films and videos, and emergency repair of facilities used chiefly by pupils or parents. Beginning in fiscal year 1993, the federal government should allocate no less than 230 million dollars annually to strengthen these schools through the support of an Institute for the Education of At-risk Students; the funding of a federal resource and technical assistance entity in each one of the one hundred poorest districts; and the launching of experimental new American schools in these district.

No less than three billion dollars should be appropriated annually for distribution through a federal revenue-sharing program. The funds from the program should be distributed on a per pupil basis with all school districts being eligible except those that do not have an enrollment with at least ten percent or more of their pupils eligible for the federal free lunch program.

Important as it is, however, the more relevant use of federal resources will short of dealing with the very "clear and present danger" facing our students unless parents and families in the African American community make a full commitment of time, energy and money to the education of our children and ourselves. We must aggressively seek ways to create an atmosphere for intellectual development and an environment for learning. Our communities must become "learning communities," our neighborhoods "neighborhoods of students." Our very survival depends on it.

Dr. LeMelle was former U.S. Ambassador to Kenya and is also Chairman of the National Citizens Commission for African American Education

Black Conservatives Surface

BY REV. RON ROSS
Chairman, African American Comm.

There is a storm cloud brewing on the horizon of African America today. It hangs heavy with the deep convictions and morals of a leadership in an African America that has basically been silent. These new leaders have an agenda that will change the course of the tortuous voyage that Black America appears doomed to sail.

When this storm hits it will wreak havoc on the system that has held African Americans as a permanent underclass for so long. It will take on the welfare state, support and bring about economic independence, and clear the African American agenda of dead weight like women's rights, gay rights, and other non essential issues.

It must be realized that African America is making a stand today to no longer sit idly by and allow her people to be led down the paths of destruction by the tomism of the liberal leadership. It is time that the toms who support the liberal agenda begin to seek shelter, for this is not a movement of the upper echelon but rather of the grass-roots African American, whose power does

not lie in his salary but in his ability to vote. Make no mistake about it--groups like the congressional Black Caucus, NAACP, Urban League, and other are in grave danger. Unless these groups get back to their grass-roots people, their future looks very bleak.

For quite some time Americans have been led to believe that because the leadership of Black America has been attaching every liberal issue to the civil rights movement, all African Americans are totally liberal. This is just not true. By tradition African American people tend to be conservative when it comes to morals and values, even though there have been constant attempts to dispute this fact.

As new and old issues that destroy the African American Community become more and more powerful (with no relief in sight) African American leaders who have been silent on the issue of conservative vs. liberal are beginning to speak out.

During the week of September 10, 1991, Black Americans from all around the country came together to create a new leadership, a leadership that will not sell traditional Black values for

thirty pieces of silver. These leaders came together in our nation's capital to support Judge Clarence Thomas and to attend a Black genocide conference. The African American leaders who attended these events were fed up with liberals pretending they knew what was best for Blacks and that they spoke for all African Americans. These leaders have vowed to bring down the institutions that care nothing about the Blacks of this country and everything about themselves.

The time has come for black politicians to stop spouting empty rhetoric and supporting unsound programs. The African America of the future wants solid answers and proven solutions to her problems. She wants it to be known that she will "KEEP HOPE ALIVE" if she is given hope; she will fulfill "THE DREAM" if given the tools; she will know that she is "SOMEBODY" if she is empowered with true knowledge of an economic system that many have worked so hard to keep her ignorant of. She will believe that "OUR TIME HAS COME" only when the clock chimes with true equality, not quotas.

perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

A Picture May Not Be Worth A Thousand Words

As we wind up the current series on an examination of the Portland School Districts, "Baseline Essays," we may take heart for just through the natural course of things the detractors are being overcome by a wealth of validating evidence developed and published by top level researchers, universities and other scholars.

The following case in point enables me to get into the entire scheme of artist's renditions of historical themes and personages being a clear exposition of cultural and racial bias (quite natural, I suppose, though it seems rather ludicrous to open a science publication and find what are ostensibly Scandinavians skipping across the African Veldt in ancient times). Don't laugh! These people are quite serious about preserving a cultural one-up-man-ship and understand very well that "one picture is worth a thousand words."

An exception is again found in the excellent material put out by Time Life Books. There is a current advertising package being mailed describing their new series on ancient history, "Lost Civilizations, first publication, Egypt: Land of the Pharaohs." It promises to be as factual and authentic as the publisher's 1965 series "Great Ages of Man, lead volume, Ancient Egypt." The renditions of the artists seem valid representations of African peoples who lived in the contiguous areas of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan long before the incursions of Europeans and Asians.

The new book has a chapter, "The Stories Mummies Tell," and do they ever. In this advertising package you will find a photograph of the unwrapped mummy of a thirteen-year-old Egyptian girl. ("With the new techniques of forensic anthropology, the face of a

long-dead Egyptian comes alive again"). How now, you racists? One can go right over to King School and find scores of look-alikes among the African American children there; the very same with that famous visage of the young King Tut. And, of course, there is the equally noted sculpture of Queen Nefertiti (The original African rendition, not the later Greek-inspired version reproduced ad nauseum in American publications). My, that girl had a long head just like my aunt Marjorie.

You may obtain this preview packet for free by writing Time Life Books, 1450 E. Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23280. There will be subsequent volumes, on Greeks, Rome, China, Mayas, Aztecs, etc. And try to find a copy of that 1965 book "Ancient Egypt" at a secondhand bookstore, library, wherever. Among the color photographs of 3000 year-old murals of African people, icons and every-day-life is a priceless rendition of a dozen sisters at a highly-animated cocktail party. Accompanying the picture of the partying ladies in their cornrows is a translation of the hieroglyphs beneath the mural, literally: "Typical afternoon gathering on the veranda of Mr. and Mrs. X. Guests drink quantities of beer and wine, and feast on pigeon, duck, oxen and some of Egypt's 40 varieties of breads and cakes." There are musicians and dancers, and the elegant furniture would do justice to any found in a fine home today.

Now, this was in Africa at a time before Homer and when the Greeks had not yet returned from Egyptian and Ethiopian Temple Schools to found their scientific community at Miletus--were mostly shivering in animal skins and getting hemorrhoids from sitting

around on that stone furniture (For African amenities of the same time period see "Furniture In The Ancient World"; beautiful and comfortable African craftsmanship as found in Tombs like King Tut's utilized the dowel, mortise and tenon joints and the lathe--all still thought by many to modern European inventions. Fortunately, Napoleon brought back many examples from his 1803 expedition to Africa; placed in the newly-founded Louvre Museum, this led to the still popular Empire style of furniture and dress.

So it is that the supposedly pure aesthetic of the artist can, in the wrong hands, be used to pervert history and truth--and to disconnect a people from their heritage. Though the great black historian W.E.B. Dubois documented the early presence of Africans all over the world, including the South Seas; the renditions of American artists for texts and popular books give no hint that anybody vaguely resembling an African was encountered in Captain Cook's expeditions in the Pacific: Cook Islands, Polynesia, Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti, Hawaii, New Caledonia, Marquesas, etc. Fortunately, I and others have large collections of photographs taken last century, showing the obvious African ancestry of peoples around the Pacific Rim. (Books and collections like "The Secret Museum of Man-Kind," Manhattan House, N.Y. 1925) The same holds true for Malaya, the Philippines and parts of China and Japan.

The past two centuries of European discovery and the last century of Asian entrepreneurship has all but destroyed most vestige of seminal African presence and culture. It would seem that the artists are employed to hide the remains.

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Questions and Answers

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Health Care Financing Administration

Q. What is a Medicare "participating" physician or supplier?

A. One who agrees to accept the amount approved by Medicare as full payment for services and supplies for all Medicare beneficiaries.

Q. May a participating physician or supplier bill beneficiaries for more than the amount paid by Medicare?

A. A beneficiary must first pay a \$100 deductible for the year, then Medicare pays 80 percent of the amount approved for the service. The patient is billed for the remaining 20 percent.

Q. Does Medicare pay for long-term care in a nursing home?

A. No. But Medicare can help pay for acute care and rehabilitation services in a skilled nursing facility certified by Medicare. Even in such a facility, Medicare will not pay if the services are mainly personal care such as help in walking, getting in and out of bed, eating, dressing, bathing and taking medicine.

Q. Three years ago I chose to take Medicare Part A only. Can I now also get Part B?

A. You may still enroll in Part B but the monthly premium will be higher, unless you continued to work beyond age 65 and were covered by an employer's health plan at the time you were first eligible for Medicare. In that case, you can get Part B on the same terms as you would have three years ago.

Q. Where can I learn about insurance to supplement Medicare?

A. The Social Security office or state insurance department can provide you with a copy of the Guide to Health Insurance for People with Medicare. Developed by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners and the Health Care Financing Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, it explains what Medicare pays and does not pay, discusses private health insurance and offers tips on shopping for such "Medigap" insurance.

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