

# perspectives

## Africa Revisited: A Garden Of Eden

A number of readers have asked if I have "abandoned the motherland"—it has been a while since I've written on the great continent. Not the case at all. What I've been about is restructuring my approach to presenting this theme about the seminal African culture that introduced the world to culture, religion and technology.

What I've been concerned about is that in some cities, including Portland, the bridge to our precious roots has settled down to a routine of stylized rituals and calendar observances of the major aspects of our great heritage. And while so many of us have been about an almost exclusively "cult" approach to our past, others (other races) have recognized the real significance and import of our early contributions. They have taken the ball and run with it, making critical correspondences to today's culture—from Language and socio-economics to technology and commerce (and jobs!)

As several readers state it, "despite the levels of African American involvement, from grass roots to the profession, we were unable to move beyond the ritualistic drumming, the soulful chants and dance, or the gorgeous displays of fabrics and costumes." Other blacks, speaking of their experiences at the university level or in the workplace and industry, describe the busy, lucrative commerce that is mounting daily between America and the African nations—whether controlled by the indigenous populations are not. "But seldom, as in the case of the Phillip Morris 'TOBACCO' Com-

pany, are blacks employed by the multinationals that are engaged in often exploitive trading relationships." Consequently, there is little opportunity to 'learn the ropes' for either good or evil.

Immediately brought to mind are a number of progressive or benign avenues of commerce that one would think that African Americans would have pursued—even dominated by their time, given over two decades of African studies, breast beating, summer tours and the aforementioned cultural rites. We refer to the bonanza of medicinal tropical plants being discovered and imported to this country through teams hired by our major drug companies—or financed by major universities. Our black universities should have relevant departments.

This is just one of many multibillion dollar American industries fast evolving from trade with Africa. Three quarter centuries ago, Marcus Garvey understood very well this avenue to financial emancipation for blacks, and he pursued the many commercial spinoffs that are derived from a major economic structure. He understood the subindustries and jobs that would be generated from shipping processing and brokerages to industrial chemists, accountants, clerks and warehousemen. But that was sixty or seventy years ago; but, today, we do not have the talented, aggressive and ambitious generation of blacks men like Garvey thought would take up the torch—'educated', better read, better traveled, whatever.

Instead, a number of my peer group are asking, "was it a mistake to have sweated, sacrificed and gone broke giving them an education and experienced-based input? And we are apt to conclude, "it must have been, for they are picking up right where things left off in the sixties—marching, yelling, begging, pleading, hustling dead end forms of grants and fighting for T.V. Time." What, indeed, has happened to the black innovators and inventors of yesteryear? And what may be even more tragic is the fact that so many of these people have united to present themselves to "Ole Massa" as the key power brokers for dealing with African American communities.

Returning to Africa, "the botanical garden", I would note that both my major medical education projects designed for minority youth emphasized that there was a major connection with tropical rain forests. Both the college and high school students were advised to this effect and were told of surprising career opportunities that could be generated at home and abroad. This direction was given as far back as the first project (1874) and as late as my 1987 project. And even now as I prepare a major operation for fall, I'm exchanging correspondence with African Universities. And, particularly, there is a "use-the-Library" component to expand the student's comprehension of the medical infrastructure: medical citations in "The Dictionary of Occupational Titles" and "Gale's Encyclopedia of Associations".

For those readers who find Africa a fascinating subject, you may order a most comprehensive catalog free of charge from an African American firm, "A & B Books," 149 Lawrence Street, Brooklyn N.E. 11203 (718) 596-3389.



by  
Professor  
McKinley  
Burt

# ALONG THE COLOR LINE

by Dr. Manning Marable

## Ben Chavis: New Leader For The NAACP

The recent selection of the Reverend Ben Chavis, Jr., as the NAACP's new leader is the first significant step forward for the national civil rights organization in twenty years. Chosen by thirty of 57 votes among the NAACP's board, Chavis emerged as the leading candidate only days after the Reverend Jesse Jackson dropped out of a four-way race for the post.

Chavis first became known as a prominent political prisoner in the 1970's as leader of the "Wilmington Ten." Chavis and other civil rights activists were convicted with fire-bombing a white-owned store in Wilmington, North Carolina. After a series of international petitions, rallies, and demonstrations on his behalf, Chavis's conviction was overturned on appeal after serving four years in prison. In the 1980s, Chavis emerged as a leader of the National Black Political Assembly, and a major supporter of Jesse Jackson's presidential campaigns of 1984 and 1988. In recent years, Chavis served as Executive Director of the United Church of Christ's Commission on Racial Justice.

Chavis's key strength is his popularity among a wide spectrum of African-American activists and grassroots, community leaders, many of them have known Chavis for nearly two decades, or have worked with him in a number of organizations.

Black nationalists, many of whom are among the NAACP's sharpest critics, applauded the selection of Chavis. Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, spokesman for Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, praised the choice of Chavis, and even encouraged Muslims to join the NAACP. Chicago black nationalist Conrad Worrill told the press the "Chavis

can bring all of the black leadership to the table." On the left, Charlene Mitchell, leader of the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression, praised Chavis as an outstanding progressive leader.

Chavis's selection comes at a moment of self-doubt and critical reassessment within the entire civil rights community. The NAACP has lost the support of younger African-Americans, who view the organization as a relic of the political past. Economically, the NAACP also had a deficit of \$650,000 in 1992, forcing the firings of fifteen or more employees at its national office in Baltimore.

But Chavis is already taking the right steps to restore confidence. Before the verdict was announced in the second Rodney King trial, he toured south central Los Angeles to listen and learn from local residents. In late April, Chavis hosted a national gang summit to halt the destructive violence between young African-Americans in our central cities. Chavis calls for outreach efforts to bring other oppressed people of color into the NAACP—including Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Asian-Americans and American Indians.

Chavis realizes that the NAACP must win back the enthusiasm and allegiance of young African-Americans who have no personal memories of the desegregation campaigns, voter registration drives across the South, and the NAACP-sponsored legal challenges against racism. As Chavis states: "The NAACP has to redefine the sum and substance of the civil rights movement and have the courage to provide the leadership to transform...the quality of life of the African-American community."

Some black liberal and progressive observers have already criticized the selection of Chavis, insisting that Jackson, black America's most influential spokesperson, should have been selected as the NAACP national secretary. In the NAACP's preliminary vote taken by its search committee, Jackson was the leading candidate for the post, followed closely by Jewell Jackson-McCabe, founder of the group, "One Hundred Black Women." But Jackson wisely withdrew when it was apparent that the majority of NAACP board members opposed his nomination. Jackson has a long history of personal egotism and a top-down managerial style, in which he makes all the key decisions. Moreover, some have argued that Jackson's major accomplishments—from being King's lieutenant in the sixties to running for president in the 1980s—are already behind him. By contrast, Chavis, at age 45, is only now coming into national leadership, and his major accomplishments will be achieved in the future.

We are in a period of transition, in which the "old" black leadership of Hooks and Jackson, trained and educated during their turmoil of the desegregation era, is only beginning to depart from public prominence. The old actors have finished playing their parts, but the new players are only beginning to assume their rightful places on the stage. Chavis represents the first significant national black leader who is essentially a product of the post-Civil Rights era. Under Ben Chavis, the NAACP may recapture its courage and confidence, charting a dynamic blue print for a renewed activism for people of color in the twenty-first century.

## Portland Public Schools Special Education Department Recommend Lay Offs Of School Social Workers.

Do we need Social Workers in the Special Education Department of the Portland Public School Systems? Apparently the decision making body of this department feels not. Social workers represent one of the most diverse populations (29 per cent) in the district.

The decision making body feels that our uniqueness can be absorbed in that of the school psychologist whose main responsibility is testing. It is recommended that the entire social workers department be eliminated and 14 additional psychologist be hired.

The greatest impact of this lay-off will be felt by the Afro-American Community. Our schools will lose 8-10 Afro-American MAW Social Workers. Afro-American students make up the largest part of the special education population will be alienated from the system. This population is the most difficult to contact and most troubled. They are also the ones

who have reasons to mistrust the systems. Social workers help these parents utilize resources available to them.

In the Special Education Department the eligibility process includes a MDT team which includes a school psychologist, a social worker, an academic specialist and a speech language pathologist. The only minority (Afro-American) on this team is the social worker. To eliminate Afro-American social workers is to eliminate a cross-cultural perspective to special education.

Afro-Americans by virtue of its culture, have a special linkage to the community. There is an understanding of our differences and our similarities. We are a part of the community (which includes churches, NAACP, Urban League etc.). This factor cannot be overlooked.

Because special education only started recruiting Afro-Americans within the last twelve years, we would

be the first to go, even if monies were generated from other resources, because we were last hired.

One parent related that she felt that her child needed special ed services and allowed it to happen because the "Black" social worker said it was "O.K." and I know her from church so I believe her. I also believed her when they said he no longer qualified. I would have sued to keep him out if she had not advised me in a human and respectful manner. She made me feel as if I had a choice and that I was an O.K. parent. His disability was not my fault and the teachers were not wanting to label him because he was a Black male and could not deal with him. I will always be grateful for my child's academic success.

I urge the community to take a stand for our children and be positive in giving recommendations to the decision making body who is having difficulties in this area.

## This Way For Black Empowerment

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

### ADL Spy Network Exposed

The Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith was founded in 1913. Its current national chairman, Melvin Salberg, describes it as "a civil rights and Jewish defense agency, which has fought to protect all minorities from discrimination for 80 years."

But since the early '70s the ADL's focus has changed. From fighting strenuously against anti-Semitism, it has turned more and more of its attention to investigating the liberal-left, civil liberties, Black and Arab-American communities, and carrying out politically motivated "fact-finding" operations with troubling connections to the police and international intelligence agencies.

On April 8, more than 750 pages of documents were released in San Francisco Superior Court, showing that the ADL has illegally acquired and distributed information about individuals and organizations across the political spectrum, and that its global network includes local police departments throughout the United States, the FBI, the Mossad (Israel's intelligence agency) and South African intelligence agents.

Bullock told the S.F.P.D. that his work for the South Africans was "independent" of the ADL, although he told the FBI that the ADL in New York had introduced him to the South Africans in the first place. He also claimed later that his first contact with South African intelligence agents had been arranged by Gerard. (In 1991 the ADL gave Gerard a free trip to Israel in return for his services.)

The ADL has tried to distance itself from any knowledge of Bullock's "extra-curricular" activities, although it has been reported that the organization is paying for his legal defense. Until last week's release of documents, in fact, the ADL insisted that it was

cooperating with the police, and was not a target of the investigation. Not any more.

The ADL's shift away from fighting anti-Semitism is not new. In 1970 Saul Jofes, a former official of the ADL's parent organization, sued the ADL in federal court, charging that it meddled in international politics, often at "the bidding of the government of Israel."

In 1986 the ADL jumped into the race for governor of New York state, joining forces with the conservative Republican and the right-wing Right to Life candidates, as well as the reactionary Rupert Murdoch-owned New York Post, to embarrass the liberal Democratic incumbent, Mario Cuomo. When the governor suggested that I—the only woman and the only African American candidate in the race—should be included in a statewide televised debate, the post invoked the ADL's chief "fact-finder" in New York, Irwin Suall, as the authority on me:

"According to Irwin Suall of the Anti-Defamation League, the NAP 'dabbles in anti-Semitism and actively collaborates with anti-Semites.' Suall said the NAP—which mixes political activism with unlicensed psychotherapy—has 'cult-like characteristics.'"

Despite the falsehood of the ADL's charges, the controversy forced Cuomo to accept a compromise eliminating the face-to-face debate. And I was thereby denied the opportunity to address the electorate on an equal footing with the other candidates.

It was in late 1987 that Roy Bullock began spying for the South Africans. He told the San Francisco police that over a period of a few years he received a total of \$15,000 from the South Africans for information. One particularly chilling portion of the

files includes ADL surveillance of ANC leader Chris Hani while he was on a speaking tour in California. Last week, Hani was assassinated in South Africa.

Former Congressman Pete McCloskey (himself a target of the ADL's spy operation) has filed a class action suit on behalf of individuals who were spied on because of their opposition to apartheid in South Africa or the policies of the Israeli government.

Albert Mokhiber, the director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, plans to file a lawsuit against the ADL soon.

Last week I contacted Mayor David Dinkins, drawing his attention to the investigation of the ADL underway in San Francisco and calling on him to appoint an independent prosecutor to probe the links between the ADL, the FBI and the New York City Police Department. Wilbert Tatum, the publisher and editor-in-chief of the New York Amsterdam News, has also publicly called for an investigation into the ADL's activities in New York.

The ADL has apparently become more concerned with playing power politics than with carrying out its original purpose, which was to fight anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry. After police state-like operations such as the federal COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) were exposed and fell into disrepute in the late '60s and early '70s, it became politically expedient, in my opinion, for the Feds to farm out their intelligence gathering chores to private entrepreneurs. I believe the ADL took the opportunity to go into the political information business and, in so doing, betrayed its responsibility to the Jewish community and its allies.

### Packwood Announces Introduction Of National Bottle Bill

Oregon Senator Bob Packwood announced today that legislation aimed at increasing the recycling of beverage containers, reducing the amount of garbage, protecting the environment, and conserving our nation's energy and natural resources will be introduced in conjunction with this week's "Earth Day" activities.

The "National Beverage Container Reuse and Recycling Act of

1993", commonly referred to as the Bottle Bill, establishes a national container deposit system, similar to that of Oregon's. The bill will encourage Americans to recycle beverage containers.

The legislation requires states that do not currently have a bottle bill to develop one within two years, or to develop a system that recycles at least 70 percent of its beverage containers.

Senator Packwood said, "The vast

majority of Americans, 76 percent according to a recent poll, support a national container deposit law. In my home state of Oregon, the recycling effort is in full swing and we have a 93 percent recycling rate for beverage containers. I believe that a person will think twice before throwing a beverage container in the trash or along the roadside if they know that they can get a little return on their investment.

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