



West Coast Publishers Meet

Opening remarks on the occasion of the 18th Cal-Pac Convention of the West Coast Black Publishers Association Convention held recently in Las Vegas, Nev. were made by Bernie Foster. His message addressed the challenges and responsibilities of the black press in America and the importance of free speech. Pictured are (from left) Jim Williams, president of Cal-Pac North in Oakland, Calif., Michael Suggs, national manager of corporate affairs for RJ Reynolds Tobacco Co., Foster of Portland, Clem Daniels, state president of Cal-Pac, John Hoy, public issues consultant for RJR and Gilbert Baker, president of Cal-Pac South in Los Angeles.

Urban League Guild Welcomes Okianer Dark



Okianer Christian Dark, wife of Urban League of Portland President Lawrence J. Dark, is welcomed to Portland by Helloise Hill (left) and Peggy Ross.

Urban Renewal: People, Politics And Planning: The Africans Began It All 4000 Years Ago

By Prof. McKinley Burt

Last week, I promised more revelations. Indeed, it would seem that the bare statement of almost any fact about the historical development of the so-called "modern" urban infrastructure proves to be a "revelation".

This is especially true when we consider the pioneering role of African people in this process, as incomprehensible as this may seem to so many of us who have been brainwashed or simply left ignorant and deceived by the establishment (both academia and media). The truth of the matter is that the blacks of the 'Egypt, Sudan/Nubia and Ethiopia' geographical complex developed what is functional yet beautiful in man-made landscapes--and as Napoleon's 1798 expedition detailed so well, accomplished this long before the Greek imitations and over a thousand years before the Romans.

In this month's Scientific American Magazine, the most respected of the genre, is an 8-page article, magnificently illustrated, which documents all of this within the context of Napoleon's effort; The Scientific Importance of Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign". Read that as "Africa, big, black and competent." Urban Planning in stone long before mud huts of the "Fertile Crescent".

The subheading of the article tells it all; or it seems to. "Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt brought French Scientists and engineers to the Nile. Their work, in turn, brought the splen-

dors of the Nile to Europe". The gift from the African continent was much greater than the phraseology implies. Most importantly the armada of 400 ships carried not only thousands of soldiers but 151 scientists, engineers, medical men and scholars who were supported in turn, by artists, surveyors, mapmakers and language experts.

So it is obvious that this incredible expedition was designed from the start to voraciously seize the seminal concepts that Africa had developed 4000 years earlier and graft them onto a stumbling and war-torn European establishment. These desperate attempts to bring some vigor and intellectual vitality to Europe went far beyond the importation of so called modern urban design like black Queen Hatshepsut's design of panoramic city vistas of broad, tree-lined boulevards with municipal gardens, parks and appropriately located public squares and buildings (from 1500 B.C.). As mentioned, the Greeks and Romans slavishly copied the formats of the African Cities and infrastructure.

The memoirs and monographs of the French Expedition (La Description de l'Egypte) cover many topics that today would be classified as social science or humanities. "These include anthropology (both cultural and physical), demography, meteorology, political science, sociology, geopolitics, agronomy, microeconomics, medieval history,

administrative history, linguistics and musicology--disciplines that did not yet exist for the most part. The authors of these pieces also were engineers, scientists and military men, people trained to be systematic, who knew how to look around them and take the measure of what they saw." Key to an appreciation of the African perspective of the modern metropolitan vista is the fact that Chabrol de Volvic, one of the engineers who accompanied Napoleon on the expedition, launched a new career after retiring as mayor of the seine in 1820. "He then ordered the compilation of an urban topography, 'Statistique de la Ville de Paris', in effect an application to the capital of France of the techniques of deep description he and his colleagues had employed in Egypt."

Consequently, first in Paris and then in the rest of the world, this great African Renaissance foreshadowed the shape of the twentieth century: The Arch de Triumph, the broad boulevards like the Champ Elysees

which Vast corridors were opened upon by public parks and gardens in the manner of black Queen Hatshepsut almost 4000 years earlier; magnificent public buildings already incorporating the Egyptian mathematical formula called the "Golden Section" in structural design.

This brilliant 4000-year old urban scheme was to become the backbone of the architectural system developed by the great French architect Le Corbusier for his construction of anything from the United Nations building in New York to apartments and closets. And, of course, there were the 'Obelisks; graceful stone towers that were carted off from Africa to every important urban scenario in the world, including Central Park in New York. The Washington Monument is a perfect replica. When will our wayward children be told who they really are--what they're capable of? Continued next week.

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