

EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Neccassarily
Reflect Or Represent The Views Of
The Portland Observer Staff

May 17th was the 41st anniversary of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation case. Thurgood Marshall argued for the legal principle of "equal protection under the law" and to overturn the 58-year-old legal principle of "separate but equal" established in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of 1896.

The Court held that "separate but equal" was inherently unequal. What did inherently unequal mean? Did it mean that African American education was inherently inferior to white education? NO! Did it mean that white education was inherently superior to black education? NO!

The Court meant that the "separate but equal" doctrine in *Plessy* contained two inherent contradictions. First, it meant that if two educational systems were Truly equal, why would they need to be separate? That was a philosophical contradiction! Second, it meant that if two educational systems were separate, history had taught us that it was guar-

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

"Segregation Today, Tomorrow And Forever"

anteed that they would not be equal! A practical contradiction.

The Court ordered public schools desegregated "with all deliberate speed." A new study by some of the nation's top scholars and educators was released this week by the southern Education Foundation. It shows that not one of the 12 states that formerly administered segregation at universities or colleges can demonstrate an "acceptable level of success in desegregating its higher edu-

cation system."

Among the study's findings were: (1) in 8 of 12 states, fewer than 10 percent of black freshmen were enrolled in their state's largest and most prestigious institutions; (2) Black and Hispanic people are underrepresented among bachelor's degree recipients in every state and in virtually every field of study; and (3) the kind of financial aid most needed by low-income families, who are disproportionately minorities, is declining. In the 1970s,

more students received need-based Pell Grants from the Federal Government than borrowed under Federal student loan programs. For 1995, the number of borrowers anticipated will be nearly 70 percent higher than the number of grant recipients and more than four times as much Federal money will be spent on loans as grants.

The study said that changes at all levels of education would be necessary to bring about true desegregation in higher education. Improvements in school financing and curriculums are needed from the elementary level on up. This decline in equal educational opportunities is coming precisely at a time when education budgets and student aid are facing major cuts; and directly affecting African American and Hispanic students in the states where the population is increasing the fastest, and in the states which have the largest percentage of minority members. The study said that this trend was not just a southern phenomena. Declining tuition grants for low-income students are freezing minority students out of higher education across the nation.

Vantage Point

Haki R. Madhubuti: Architect Of Reconciliation

BY RON DANIELS

Though a number of important leaders, including Dr. James Turner, Dr. Conrad Worrill and Leonard Muhammad, Chief of Staff of the Nation of Islam, helped to facilitate the coming together of Minister Louis Farrakhan and Dr. Betty Shabazz on May 6, it was Haki R. Madhubuti who played the pivotal role in shaping this historic moment.

Given the enormous anguish and pain surrounding the assassination of Malcolm X and the intense antagonisms that grew out of this tragic event, it took someone with extraordinary qualities to undertake the vital mission of reconciliation and healing; someone respected by Minister Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam and the nationalist community, and someone trusted and respected by Dr. Betty Shabazz and the aggrieved family. Haki Madhubuti was the person uniquely suited to accomplish this mission.

Author, poet, publisher, activist, visionary Pan-African nationalist Haki Madhubuti has emerged as one of the major leaders of our time. He is a prolific writer having authored nineteen books. Haki is a determined institution-builder who has erected the Institute for Positive Education, Third World Press and the New Concept Development Center as living models of African Centered Self-

help development.

I first came to know Haki up close in 1971-72 when we worked on the first African Liberation Day Support Committee. In recent years we have worked together on the National Malcolm X Commemoration Commission. Haki is a remarkable human being. Despite his tremendous record of achievement there is not an arrogant bone in his body. Haki is universally respected as one of the most patient, caring, giving/sharing, humble Africans on the planet. He speaks the truth to the people and acts out those truths in his daily life. Haki leads through service and example. He is a model of the new African person we are striving to develop to serve/lead the race into the twenty-first century.

Haki credits El Hajji Malik Shabazz for being the leader most responsible for his growth and development as a committed African person. Malcolm X was/is the inspiration and model for his life's work. Several of his books are dedicated to the memory of the man whom Haki says saved his life. It is understandable therefore that Haki sees support for Malcolm's family as a personal and racial responsibility. Hence he has demonstrated an unconditional love and devotion to Sister Betty Shabazz and the family; a love and devotion which has earned her respect and trust.

Haki was at the side of Dr. Betty Shabazz in Minneapolis for the arraignment of their daughter Qubilah

on the charge of plotting to assassinate Minister Farrakhan. At one of the most critical moments in the life of the Shabazz family since the assassination of Malcolm X, Haki Madhubuti was there to support, console, comfort and advise the wife of this martyred mentor. Once the heinous entrapment scheme unfolded Haki was also among a handful of nationalist leaders who worked closely with Minister Farrakhan, at his request, to assess the situation and shape an appropriate response. Farrakhan's response to the government's plot was extremely effective in educating the African masses and confounding the intent of the government. His heartfelt embrace of Qubilah Shabazz also touched Sister Betty Shabazz at the human level.

In an extended conversation with Sister Betty during those frightening moments in Minneapolis Sister Betty said to Haki, "we must meet." These words coming from a wife/mother/woman who has suffered so much agony and pain and struggled so hard to overcome the adversity wrought by the murder of her husband set the stage for the healing process to begin. Acting as a racial diplomat respected and trusted by all parties concerned Haki Madhubuti, working with Leonard Muhammad of the Nation of Islam, arranged a secret meeting between Minister Farrakhan and Dr. Betty Shabazz.

The meeting took place in New York six weeks before their joint appearance at the Apollo Theater on

May 6. It was in this private face to face meeting that some of the most critical discussions of our time began. It was in this meeting that Minister Farrakhan made it clear that he was genuinely interested in discussing/examining what went wrong thirty years ago, exploring any mistakes that he might have made and opening a path to healing and reconciliation. He also offered to lead the Black Nation in an effort to support Qubilah Shabazz and the Shabazz family as a matter of Black national duty and responsibility.

In an act of great courage and wisdom, Sister Betty accepted Minister Farrakhan's offer, agreed to appear with him at a fund raising event for Qubilah and expressed a willingness to continue the dialogue/discussions about the painful events of thirty years ago and thereafter. The May 6 event at the Apollo Theater in Harlem was the outcome of this historic private meeting.

That which the Black Nation and the world witnessed at the Apollo Theater on this momentous occasion was in no small measure the result of the work of a humble servant of the race who saw an opportunity to contribute to the healing of people/nation and accepted the challenge. Despite the cutting barbs of the critics and the disbelief of the skeptics, he kept his eyes on the prize. The Race owes a debt of gratitude to one of the most significant leaders of our time, Haki R. Madhubuti, architect of reconciliation and healing.

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

Building Bridges With The Transnational Radical Party

BY DR. LENORA FULANI

I recently returned from Rome, in Italy, where I had the opportunity to address 300 delegates and hundreds of observers at the Congress of the Transnational Radical Party.

I presented a detailed report on the emergence of an independent political movement in America, and the particular significance of that movement to the African American community. Delegates from 30 nations - including countries in Africa, Eastern and Western Europe and the former Soviet Union -- were quite interested to hear about the development of multi-partyism in the United States.

The Transnational Radical Party, which originated in Italy, champions grassroots democracy and human rights and has led an international campaign for a moratorium on the death penalty. Its members have been elected to the national parliaments of numerous Western and Eastern European and African countries, as well as to the European Parliament. They are currently lobbying the United Nations to establish and international criminal court to try

crimes against humanity, building on their success in lobbying for tribunals to investigate crimes against humanity in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. A leading member of the Transnational Radical Party, Emma Bonino, is the Minister of Human Rights of the European Parliament, and has visited Rwanda in an effort to deal with the refugee crisis there.

I was first introduced to the Transnational Radical Party when I had the pleasure of meeting Emma Bonino in New York last year. Emma had come to the United Nations on behalf of the Transnational Radical Party international campaign to abolish the death penalty, an issue which I feel very, very passionately about. I believe the death penalty is morally wrong and ineffective. In the United States, where support for the death penalty is rising, its implications for our community are quite serious. The racism of the American criminal justice system is known throughout the world. America's Death Row is populated predominantly by men of color. In Rome, on Palm Sunday, the Congress participants joined a 10,000-person march on the Vatican to demand the Pope unequivocally oppose the death penalty.

I had heard of Emma Bonino before I had the opportunity to meet her and have her as a guest on my weekly television show. I knew that she was a powerful advocate for humanitarian and progressive social causes. I knew she was a "sister in the struggle." But until she and I met, I did not fully appreciate how much Emma Bonino and the Transnational Radical Party believe that there is a profound connection between creating humanistic solutions to the social, cultural, political and economic problems faced by the majority of the world's people and grassroots democratic activism: the participation of ordinary people in the political process.

As part of my address to the Congress, I recalled the writings of W.E.B. DuBois, the great African American scholar, journalist, Pan Africanist and communist, who wrote nearly a hundred years ago that the problem of the 20th century was the problem of the color line. I told the international gathering that the problem of the color line remains the great unsolved problem of American political, social, cultural and economic life. Unlike other sectors of the American population,

which have been assimilated into the economic mainstream and into diverse power sharing arrangements within the two-party system, the Black community has had the door shut in its face. And the strategy of attempting to force that door open through the Democratic Party has reached a dead end.

Together with several of my closest colleagues in America, including Dr. Fred Newman, a key architect of the independent political movement in the United States, I joined the Transnational Radical Party. As a political activist and a developmental psychologist concerned with creating an international environment for human development, I was very motivated by the hundreds of delegates, from such diverse backgrounds, who had come together at the Congress with humanistic, democratic and internationalist objectives.

Building a political alliance between pro-democracy forces in Europe, Africa and elements of the former Soviet Union and the independent movement here in the United States is a critical step in creating an international environment for humanism and development.

perspectives

"Old Man River, He Don't Say Nothin, He Just Keep Rollin Along"

Over the years, an assortment of gifted baritones (many of them African American) have kept this plaintive lyric soaring over the rolling greens of beautiful 'Forest Park'. No, not Portland's Forest Park, beautiful woodland that it is; but another one, displaced in time and space to a midwestern flood plain frequently over whelmed by the raging torrents of an angry and abused Mississippi River. St. Louis, the Dixie belle, gateway to the west.

A devotee of the genre who read the drama pages might immediately assume the reference to be to "Showboat", a robust, hit-filled



By
Professor
Mckinley
Burt

Broadway musical created almost 70 years ago by the genius of Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein. Cheering audiences back there in the 1930's at the St. Louis outdoor Municipal Opera had the same response as did Manhattan critics just last week. 'Drama Desk' named Show Boat the best musical production of the New York theatre season.

The St. Louis Municipal Opera was a huge, natural amphitheatre that took its own dramatic advantage of a forest bowl. As I remember, this was the only public facility that did not mandate segregated seating. Its gorgeous productions were in the "light" operamode (combining song and dialogue), and were enthusiastically received by the entire populace, young and old, all races and cultures, and all economic groups. For some it was enjoyable theatre at its best, for many others just good entertainment, and for thousands of other theater-goers, it was a glorious fun-filled escape from a humid, sweltering city on a summers evening.

Each summer, beginning in mid-June, 12 weeks of play-bills for the number of productions (3 nights a week) would reveal a wondrous selection of musical Americana. The toughest audiences would leave humming and whistling the catchy Broadway show tunes -- or singing the wondrously lyrical pieces of European composers. Our senior choir at the segregated Summer High School also did pretty well with Rogers and Hammerstein, Sigmund Romberg or Gilbert and Sullivan. As much as the art museum in another part of the huge park, the St. Louis Municipal Opera was a strong acculturation process.

Today, I can almost recall a typical summer's play-bills: "Roberta, Porgy and Bess Show

Boat, Blossom Time, The Red Mill, The New Moon, The Pirates of Penzance, Madame Butterfly, The Cat And The Fiddle, The Desert Song." Well, that's still pretty good, I think.

To estimate the cost of the elaborate costumes and stage sets for these lavish productions is simply mind-boggling -- and we've said nothing yet about paying the actors and stagehands. Even more remarkable is the fact that all this was accomplished while the country was in the grip of a terrible depression -- and yet, a considerable number of seats were reserved for students and

those just simply too poor to buy even the most reasonably priced tickets. Times were lean, but civic spirit strong.

The Encycloped

Britannica tells us, "it was not until the gods of Egypt were accepted by the Greeks that there appears any ceremony which can truly be called dramatic. The Greek drama arose through the worship of the gods of vegetation and later developed into the form of the plays... It is difficult to think of the drama of the Greeks without thinking its close connection with the dance" (1958, p.131). Osiris, African god of vegetation, is now the "Jolly Green Giant."

And it is "difficult" for me to think of the opera as it developed in Italy (and Moorish Spain) without recalling how the rudiments, began with the antics and the pantomimes of their performances, some were lucky enough to acquire wealthy patrons and to eventually develop their performances into scheduled productions that became what we know as "the opera". Other performers, less organized, remained what 'Webster' describes as "jongleurs... itinerant medieval entertainer, proficient in juggling, acrobatics, music and recitation."

Well, the hot dog vendors are quieting down, the house lights are dimming and the blackening sky at day's end is being pierced by a thousand stars.

A zillion mothers, like mine, are calling to small boys and girls and they duck through and past shadowy figures, headed for their seats. From somewhere in hidden reaches of the amphitheatre spring forth stabling beams of light that settle first on the conductor and then on the orchestra.

A hush falls over the audience and even the softest summer breezes slow their passage through fir, pine, oak and maple. Frederick Olmstead's concept of New York's Central Park was magnificent, but I'll take "Forest Park" in St. Louis any day and Sunday.

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