Black Hebrews

Continued from page 1

The men, obviously pleased and amused that what they called "biblical accounts" said the controversy is not widespread but basically confined to a couple of religious sects."

Rabbi Israel Chasnoff and Yitzhak Burg, the two representatives of the Black Hebrews have caused the most controversy about the group, most of it verbal, although at least one man has visited the Black Hebrew communities, Simeon said.

In contrast to the overview given to the public by the newspaper accounts, Simeon said, Black Hebrews live in harmony both with the governments of the cities in which they live and with their neighbors.

In addition, he said, the people of the communities, which number about 1500 in total are completely self-sufficient, as opposed to being "shiftless" as the articles implied.

"We do everything for ourselves," said Simeon, a tall, brown-skinned man who speaks with the eloquence of an orator.

"We make our own shoes, raise our own babies, and grow much of our own food."

He emphasized that the group does not live in isolation; they shop collectively at the village markets and have regular communication with their neighbors. Some of the neighbors have, he said, visited the communities and become close friends.

The mayor of Dimona is one of their friends as well, and has apparently done much to help the group feel at home in a land which some say would like them to leave.

Simeon and Mahneeel, however, say that is not the case.

CAME 11 YEARS AGO

The Black Hebrews are a group of people who consider themselves to be a part of the original tribe of Hebrew people of northern Africa. According to some scholars, all of the black race descended from the people of northern Africa, or the Hebrew people, millions of years ago.

Due to invasions by outside groups, including the Asians and other peoples, the black Hebrews were pushed to the interior of Africa, and eventually moved west. As they were pushed out, the lighter-skinned Asians and Europeans inhabited the land once held by black Africans.

In the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Mahneeel and Simeon explained, the people of northern African were still black. The Scriptures say that the descendents of Judah, the children of Abraham, will one day return to the land from which they were driven.

The Black Hebrews are that people, they say.

They do not consider themselves Jews, not in a religious sense.

"In the earliest Biblical times," Simeon said, "Jews were merely descendants of Judah. They did not belong to a particular faith; they were people of a certain land."

Neither are they Christian, they say. They do in fact live by the Ten Commandments, and they follow the teachings of Jesus.

"But we use the whole Bible," Simeon said. "It is one book. It cannot be separated."

The Black Hebrews began their journey to their so-called rightful land 11 years ago. According to Simeon, they first went to Liberia to "rid themselves of the nigritudes" picked up in America.

After spending two years in Liberia, they migrated to Israel with the intention to set up a new life in the land which was rightfully theirs.

They were held in the Israeli airport for 72 hours when they arrived.

"In Jewish law, a person may return to Israel if his mother was a Jew or if he himself recently converted to Judaism," Simeon said.

"They held us to determine our basis for claiming an ancestry of Judaism." Simeon says that the government apparently felt the group would eventually convert to Judaism, and let them in with full benefits.

When it became apparent, however, that the Black Hebrews had no intentions of converting, the government took a different position. The new arrivals of blacks from American soil were greeted with skepticism and were not welcome.

They were granted temporary visas, and when they applied for permanent visas after their first three months in the country, they were refused. In order to avoid deportation once they decided to stay in the country even without the permanent visas, they renounced their American citizenship.

The situation today has lightened considerably, the two men contend, despite the allegations made by the SUN-PAPERS.

"Black Hebrews are not being deported today," Simeon said. "It is true that some of us are there illegally, but not all of us, as the article would have you believe, and the only reason the few of us who are there illegally are in that position is because the government gave us no choice."

NOT A RELIGIOUS CULT

Both men stressed that the Black Hebrews are not a religious cult.

"We are there on the basis of nationality, not on the basis of religion," Simeon said. In fact, he said, part of the reason the natives are upset is because the Black Hebrews have refused to convert to Judaism and subject their children to the teachings of the Jewish rabbis.

"We teach our own children," Simeon said. "By the time they are six years old, they speak three languages, Arabic, Hebrew and English."

"We have defined ourselves. We don't want the Jewish people or the Jewish religion to define us."

"Our children ask questions like "Do they really eat meat in Babylon? and "Do they really shoot people in America?"

"We have worked hard to free our minds and the minds of our children of all the things we have been taught," said Mahneeel. "Once your mind is free you can do anything. Blacks in America don't think like that."

Mahneeel said all of the teaching is done by members of the Black Hebrew community, which includes former basketball players (one member high school dropouts, college grads, doctors, dentists, and grade school dropouts.

The linguist of the Dimona community is a grade school dropout who is "brilliant" in language, Simeon said.

He never would have realized his gift in America, he said.

"We do have rules," Simeon said. "We do live by the ten commandments but we do not brainwash anyone. People have left...about 74 people have left and accused us of brainwash, but that is not the case."

Simeon said that any person who continually breaks one of the commandments is advised to leave the community. "The group does not permit smoking, drinking, stealing or lying; men do practice polygamy.

"Anyone who wants to leave is free to do so," Simeon said, a little agitated. "We are in no way like the religious cults that people have come to fear."

The Israeli government, as well, has come to recognize the Black Hebrews as a viable group. Prime Minister Menachim Begin not long ago appointed a committee to study the group and its practices and to make recommendations to the government based on its findings.

That committee, Simeon said, recommended that the government grant the Black Hebrews agricultural settlements in the land.

In addition, the group was given 100 apartments three weeks ago in the city of Dimona.

It was when the recommendations of the committee were released that the issues began, Simeon said, when Burg flatly refused to acknowledge the findings.

SIMEON BEN ISRAEL (L) and MAHNEEEL BEN-ISRAEL, members of the Black Hebrews of Israel, told the AFRO that a film showing the general public how the group lives will be shown Saturday evening at Walbrook High School. The film was made and edited by members of the Black Hebrew nations. Both men will be returning to Israel soon.

Is it over for Democrats?

By James M. Abraham
AFRO Staff Writer

In the wake of last week's election, many have begun to question the future of the Democratic party, but according to Barbara Hoffman, state Democratic party official, the party "is alive and kicking, but a little bruised."

Hoffman says that there may actually be an advantage to the Demo's loss of "insider" status on Capitol Hill, where a GOP president and Senate, along with an increasingly conservative House of Representatives, have gained control.

"For one thing, if Reagan doesn't deliver, he will be jumped on," she said.

She recounted a talk she had recently with 3rd district Rep. Barbara Mikulski, who told her that she woke up one morning, and said to herself, "To hell with it, I'm not going to be bullied any more."

State legislator and head of the General Assembly's Black Caucus Del. Frank M. Conaway was defiant when he spoke with the AFRO.

"There's no disintegration in the state of Maryland," he said. "I don't think the vote was pro-Reagan or pro-Republican, it was just against Carter."

When asked what he felt was necessary in order for the party to resume national prominence, he immediately answered "a viable candidate."

"I was proud to hear that (Sen. Paul) Sarbanes stated that he was not going to change his way of voting to please that Moral Majority group," said state Del. Troy Brailey, D-45.

He added that what occurred last week was not a disintegration of the party, but a defeat by a well-organized conservative campaign. He too feels that a strong Democratic presidential challenger in 1984 will serve to reunite the party.

His choice is vice-president Walter Mondale. Conaway felt that Kennedy should get the nod.

So, in the week following the Democratic debacle across the country, a mood of defiance has replaced the atmosphere of crushing defeat which had hovered about the party.

Barbara Hoffman probably captured the mood of defiance best when she said that, based on the popular returns and not the electoral votes, "Carter actually didn't lose by that much."

Holiday workshops

Children ages 11 - 16 are invited to attend a free workshop on gift giving ideas at any one of seven branches of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System.

It's the WILDEST eyeglass offer ever made!

including Blue Cross-Blue Shield members and Maryland State employees....

FREE EYEGLASSES

Penn Optical, and ONLY Penn offers
★ Complete vision care
★ Eye examination and
★ Emergency pair of eye glasses

FREE!

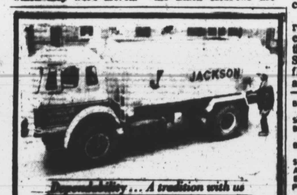
when you buy the first pair at Penn's LOW price

A really fabulous offer-for a LIMITED TIME ONLY!

Penn Optical Co.

1525 Pennsylvania Ave. 523-6359 | 520 Old Town Mall 342-1414 | 2122 E. Monument St. 327-7070 | Mondawmin Mall 669-9030

PENN IS FOR THE PEOPLE!



Personal Service . . . A tradition with us

New accepting Visa & Master Charge

THE JACKSON OIL CORPORATION
1919 N. Pearl St.
Baltimore, Maryland 21218
(301) 727-0026

ATTENTION
DR. TERRY R. WATSON
Practice of General Family Dentistry
Announces New Office Hours
9:30 A.M.-6:00 P.M., Mon., Thru Fri.
Sat., 9:30-1:00
TELEPHONE: (301) 362-6293
We Welcome All Emergencies, Dental Union Plans, Medical Assistance

BALTIMORE AFRO-AMERICAN (Registered U.S. Patent Office) Second Class postage paid at Baltimore, Md.
Circulation audited by Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC)
Published every Tuesday and Saturday by the AFRO-AMERICAN Company, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, Md. 21201. Phone (301) 728-6200.
John H. Murphy 3rd, Chairman of Board; John J. Oliver Sr., President; Mae E. Dyson, Secretary; George C. Lotter, Treasurer; Frederick A. Howard, Vice President-Production; Raymond Boone, Editor-Vice President; Kenneth O. Wilson, Vice President-Advertising; Rev. Ed L. Jackson, Vice President-Circulation; Ralph Matthews Jr., Managing Editor; Elizabeth M. Oliver, City Editor.
NITE & SATURDAY PHONE NUMBERS

CITY DESK	728-6200
CITY DESK	728-6201
CITY DESK	728-6204
EXECUTIVE OFFICES	728-6203
FRONT DESK	728-6204
CIRCULATION	728-6206
DISPATCH	728-6207
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	728-6202

A CHAMPION OF CIVIC WELFARE AND THE SQUARE DEAL
National Adv. Representatives Amalgamated Publishers Inc. 40 W. 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10018
AFFILIATED NEWSPAPERS
WASHINGTON AFRO-AMERICAN 2000 14th St., N.W. 20009 (202) 332-0200
RICHMOND AFRO-AMERICAN 301 E. Clay Street 23219 (804) 648-6070
NEW JERSEY AFRO-AMERICAN 11 Hill St., Newark 07102 Suite 208-211 (201) 2040
AFRO-Philadelphia Bureau 1417 Market St., Philadelphia 19102
TEL. (215) 564-3871
Subscription Rates

6 Months	$15.00
1 Years	$28
2 Years	$50
3 Years	$70

(You save $111) Rates for ONE edition only

'Behold the Woman'

Women's convention to draw thousands

Cecelia Williams Bryant is a woman of vision. In her richly-resonant quiet voice which holds a power of its own, she will tell you that she has "always had a vision." Mother of two children, wife of the Rev. John R. Bryant, the pastor of Bethel AME Church, Cecelia has been steadily chipping away at the walls which surround her vision, revealing a little more, it seems, everyday.

"Behold the Woman," it may be said, is just a part of that vision. To hear Cecelia define it, one cannot doubt that this international gathering of women at the Baltimore Convention Center in January will be anything less than a visit to Baltimore by the Holy Ghost as God makes a way to create just one more miracle.

"We're doing this so that we can build a cost-free women's center, right in the heart of the city," she says. "Women sometimes need someplace to go to be with themselves or with other women...you know, it ain't easy out here..."

The center will give women medical, psychological, social and, above all, spiritual counseling, when they need it, for however long they need it, free of charge. Within the walls of the center will be a buffeteria and a theater of sorts to allow the flowing of spirits and thoughts into a gourd ready to receive it. The center will be a celebration of womanhood and an attempt to permanently salvage all that womanhood actually is.

And so Behold the Woman takes up a berth of its own. Not only will women from all 50 states and from continents all over the world gather together to help raise funds for the women's center, they will be celebrating womanhood, in its universality of experience, for the purposes of forming bonds that are long-overdue and much needed.

"Experiences of womanhood are basically the same," Cecelia said. "No matter where you are, where you have been, you have been through some very specific things that make you WOMAN."

Behold will focus specifically on the struggles of the wo man of African descent. Women from Africa and the Caribbean will join together and share in the experiences that have somehow managed to be constant despite the presence of thousands of miles between them.

"There will be activities that throw us all together...the woman from the inner city sitting next to the West African sister will all of a sudden find a way and a reason to relate to each other, and a place in which to do it."

The convention, three days in duration, will feature a university offering courses in subjects ranging from dealing with a member of one's family who is incarcerated to being a woman of the arts. Courses will be offered for credit, through cooperation with the Interdenominational Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Ga. Everyone who completes the courses will be awarded a certificate. It's something to do with giving credit where credit is due.

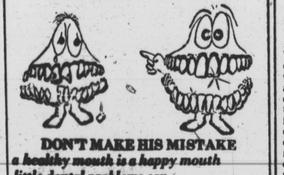
"A lot of women do not have a sense of achievement," Cecelia said. "We get so caught up in giving our men what they need that we forget ourselves. This experience called Behold wants to show women that they can achieve and that it feels good to do it."

In addition to the University there will be a cultural event, at which actress Cicely Tyson will dramatize the universality of African Afro-feminist struggles. With her that evening will be gospel songtress Katie Jackson, celebrating her own interpretation of what it has meant to be black and female...and carried through it all by God.

There will be a 500-voice women's choir and preaching by the Rev. Willie Barrow of Operation PUSH, a candlelight communion service ... an acknowledgement that without God, there would be no Behold, no celebration... no womanhood.

Mrs. Cecelia Bryant

THE DENTAL OFFICE



DON'T MAKE HIS MISTAKE
a healthy mouth is a happy mouth
little dental problems can become big tragedies
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
We Honor Insurance Plans
Visit 5418 Park Heights Avenue or call 542-0000
Monday thru Friday 9-7 p.m.
Sat. & Sun. 9-3 p.m.
Dr. W. J. Richardson and Associate: Dr. S. J. Leikin — SEDATION
Dr. C. S. Shelton — ANESTHESIA

PROBLEMS GETTING FUEL OIL???
BYNUM FUEL OIL CO.
FOR FAST DELIVERY
Call 566-4300

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

The Baltimore Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship and Training Fund admits students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school administrative programs.

The school is located at 9505 Harford Road, Baltimore, Maryland, 21234. For information, call 882-5080, from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday thru Friday.

Mrs. Dorothy Bishop, 7 other women honored by MHC Concerned Residents

Mrs. Dorothy Bishop was honored last Saturday evening by members of the Concerned Residents of the Maryland House of Correction (MHC). The chic affair was held in the attractively decorated gymnasium of MHC and close to 350 guests, residents, relatives and friends were in attendance.

The Concerned Residents, handsome in their black tuxedos with white ruffled shirts greeted the ladies at the door and escorted them to their tables. When Mrs. Bishop arrived she was welcomed personally to MHC by Warden Paul J. Davis.

The program which was completely planned by the residents included speeches by Warden Davis, Mrs. Elva Edwards, associate director, Urban Services Agency (USA) and Dr. Cathy Pope Smith, third vice-president Baltimore Branch NAACP. Edwin Goodlander, commissioner, Division of Corrections, keynote addresser was stricken with a throat infection and unable to attend.

Seven other women received plaques for "dedicated service, tireless effort, unfading loyalty and devotions."

They were Ms. Dorothy Towler, supervisor, Information Systems USA; Dr. Cathy Pope Smith; Mrs. Gertrude Steele, administrative assistant, AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers; Mrs. Claudette Costin, assistant youth director, OYA.

Also, Mrs. Marge Pinkus, chairperson, Council of Corrals, Inc.; Mrs. Martha A. Benton, advisor, Colts Corral No. 534 and Mrs. Virginia Williams, Department of Social Services.

Presenters were William Fowler, Glenn Watkins, Sunnie Rahman, John Couser, Malik Rahman, Nire Abdullah and Amin Abdullah.

Malik A. Rahman was master of ceremonies in the absence of Ms. Barbara Shaw, who is hospitalized at Maryland General Hospital.

Following dinner, guests were treated to a dance act performed by Ms. Ava Fields and Tom Hedge.

For the first time in many years residents from both institutions were allowed to participate in a celebration. When the entourage from Maryland State Penitentiary (MSP) arrived the program was halted for a few moments to allow for amenities.

Residents from MSP included Karrim Salim Alamin, president, Colts Corral No. 945; Sharrief Abdullah, Albert Anderson, Gregory Cason, Kevin Cook, Jimperetee Dixon, Tyrone Mackall, Calvin Montgomery, Robert Smallwood, Percy Smith and Steve Troxler.

The climax of the evening came when the Concerned Residents rolled out a red carpet and formed a human aisle as the lady of the hour, charming in her white two-piece floor length dress, was escorted to the podium.

In addition to citations from MHC, The City Council and Mayor William Donald Schaefer, the honoree received a leather loose leaf binder from the staff of OYA; chrystal glass and traveling clock from Mr.a and Mrs. William Sugar Cain.

Also, a diamond broach from Project Survival's Concerned Citizens, a diamond ring and plaque with a mounted clock from Colts Corral No. 954