Baltimore Afro-American

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1986 — a year of possibilities

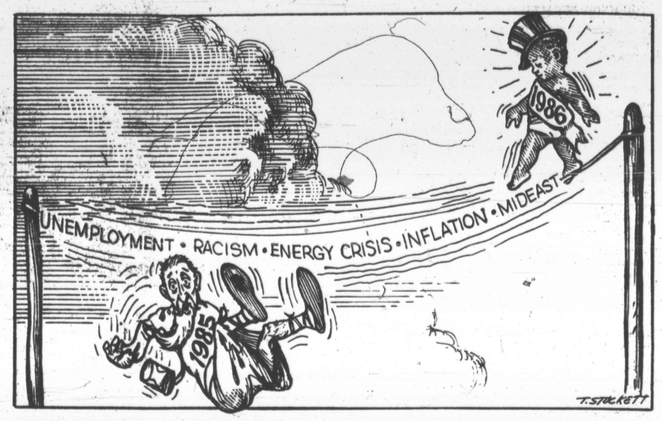
Half of the decade of the 1980s is over and the black community of Baltimore must take stock of its accomplishments in the first half of the decade and must make serious plans for the latter half.

We are entering a new era in education, business and technology which demands that black people become more competitive in these fields. The demands of a high tech world will force our youngsters to learn more at an earlier age. One who falls behind in today's rapidly changing world will seem like a cave man in a space ship.

The world of business has changed and in many ways blacks in Baltimore have not kept up. Some of our largest companies are in dire straits and the black business community in Baltimore lags behind other cities in money and influence.

On the political front, 1986 will be the last year that black Baltimoreans will have Parren J. Mitchell to rely on in the U.S. Congress. The struggle to succeed him will in all likelihood be a crowded one. This is a prize political plum for the eventual winner and this crucial position exerts tremendous influence in the community. The black community of this city must make a very wise decision in 1986.

This new year is full of possibilities and all the black community has to do to realize its potential is unify and work hard.



Slumlord settlement

The settlement this week implemented by a judge requiring Robert W. Connolly, Jr. to fix up those rental properties he owns based on timeframes established by the court, establishes a contingency fund of up to $250,000 and no less than $5,000 out of his funds administered by a court appointed monitor who will handle unfilled tenant requests for repairs and inspect Connolly properties before they are rented to new tenants or sold, was a victory for all renters.

If Connolly fails to comply, his business will be put in receivership. Also five tenants who filed suit against Connolly for neglecting to make repairs that endangered life and health received a cash settlement.

This settlement is unprecedented because the state's consumer protection law was used to bring the landlord into line. His attorney argued unsuccessfully that realty laws should take precedence over the consumer law.

The logic of the decision is obvious. Decent rental properties are items leased to a consumer with an assumption on the part of the consumer that he or she should get a dollar's worth of value for each dollar spent. Connolly was cheating the consumer in this case and in others among the tenants of his 700 properties.

In a city with an extremely tight housing market especially for poor and moderate income persons the settlement reached with one of Baltimore's largest slumlords is a ray of hope for other tenants forced to endure insensitive avaricious landlords. Everyone has a right to decent housing and since poor people pay a higher percentage of their income for housing than others, their rights especially need to be protected.

Hopefully the new year will see other slumlords made to pay.

Letters to the editor

Deplores racial harassment

Dear AFRO:

The recent newspaper reports of demonstrations in Philadelphia against black families who have moved into white neighborhoods and of racial harassment against a black family in Savage, Maryland remind us that prejudice is still deeply ingrained in our society. Such incidents could happen anywhere in the country, including here in Baltimore.

It is therefore imperative for all people of good will to make it known to their friends, neighbors and fellow workers that such actions are not only contrary to common decency, fair play, and the fundamental premises of our country, but that they hurt people and damage the fabric of our society.

It is especially important that those who influence the moral tone of our country such as President Reagan and those in his administration know that we expect his administration, most particularly the Justice Department, to strongly and positively enforce the civil rights laws of this country. Our best national policy is one of inclusion and our worst is one of division.

Kenneth Montague, Jr.
President, Baltimore Neighbors

Angry at 'Color Purple'

Dear AFRO:

I am angry. "They" did it again. Whenever there is a significant movie which should be seen and be easily accessible to by all black people in Baltimore City, "they" run the movie in just two theaters, i.e., "The Color Purple" is currently being shown at the Security Mall Cinema and, of all places, at the Timonium Cinema.

Now tell me—how can "they" talk about equality for us all when movies like "Rocky IV," "Clue," "Spies Like Us," which star white performers are being shown in eight - nine theaters throughout the metropolitan area — including at theaters, namely, The Town and Hippodrome, which are patronized primarily by blacks.

Who determines which movies we blacks should see and will patronize?

Why couldn't even one of the nine new theaters at Harbor Park in downtown Baltimore run this Pulitzer prize winning film about blacks (which stars Adolph Caesar who was nominated for an Oscar for his performance in "A Soldier's Story")? Think about it—blacks in this America are just as oppressed as the blacks in South Africa; the oppressors are simply more subtle.

Brenda Jean Lawson

Praise for column

Dear Afro:

As a regular reader of your columns and a devoted supporter of the Palestinian national movement, I was delighted with your Christmas reminder, "Jesue was a Palestinian" (Afro, 12/21). (For ALL WE KNOW by Elizabeth M. Oliver.)

In this time of rampant anti-Arab racism, promoted by the white media and the government, both in the Middle East and here in America, it is truly invigorating to see someone such as yourself speaking up for the Palestinians.

We should also remember that many of the Palestinians are Christians (about one third of the population still residing in Palestine, about one fifth worldwide).

Christmas is a particularly appropriate time to remember that hundreds of thousands of Christian Palestinians suffer the worst kind of religious persecution in the land of Jesus' birth, at the hands of the Zionist regime which is propped up with billions of dollars annually from U.S. taxpayers.

Your column, as another example of AFRO's extraordinary balance on this subject, should also remind us that American blacks and their allies are the Palestinians' truest friend and best strategic ally in North America. It is my sincerest New Year's wish that the Arab-American community will soon wake up to this fact and begin to act accordingly.

Merry Christmas to you and yours, and best wishes for 1986!

Mark Sharp

Parren J. Mitchell

Privatization and the Blues

Consistent with Reagan administration policies of favoring a return of government services to private industry, Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Maryland has proposed that it be awarded a $900 million-a-year contract to take over the Medicare health insurance program for most of the state. The proposal could mean nearly $5 billion in business for the Blues over the five-year life of the contract and is currently pending before a federal health regulatory agency in Baltimore.

The BALTIMORE SUN initially reported the proposal in August. While this proposal appeared to be moving forward, secretly, public outcry and demands for the public to participate led to a delay in a decision and the scheduling of instate public hearings.

One such hearing, held Dec. 9 at the University of Baltimore, drew fierce opposition from senior citizens, the medical establishment and other insurers.

Every one of the 22 witnesses opposed the proposal or said they could only support it with significant changes. Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panthers, opposed the plan. She called it "a repudiation of the federal government's responsibility to the public health of its citizens." "If this experiment goes forward in Maryland," she said "the aftershocks will be national in scope." Ms. Kuhn pointed out that demographically, this country is growing older. She saw this as an attempt by Blue Cross-Blue Shield to gain control of a lucrative market.

The Maryland Hospital Association also brought out some very important points in their opposing statement. The intention of the demonstration project claims to:

— Expand the number of health care insurance options available to the elderly;

— Lower the cost of health care to the elderly; and,

— Eliminate the paper work burden on the elderly by placing this responsibility with Maryland Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

Well it seems that while the Blues are professing that under their plan a beneficiary would have the freedom to choose one of six options, in fact, four of the six options are currently available to the elderly. This renders the demonstration program misleading and only offering two new health care options to the elderly rather than a wide range of new options that they would not, otherwise, have. Is an experiment of this magnitude justified by so little improvement?

There is also little, if any, evidence that this demonstration will lower the cost of health care. There are already cost containment measures attached to the four exiting options and the two new options it creates (i.e., Preferred Provider Network and Participating Provider Program) place all of their health care cost — containment efforts in an unspecified new utilization control program. Yet, it is in the area of utilization control which is already subject to severe criticism and concern from the elderly population.

Finally, at every one of the public hearings, there has been a great deal of skepticism about Blue Cross and Blue Shield's abilities to handle the paper work load. The most recent, publicly available report on Blue Shield documented what witnesses have been saying. Specifically, the report states that, "The carrier statistical standard scores indicate, in essence, that it processes Medicare claims slowly, expensively, and with a noticeable number of errors."

The report also stated that, "Blue Shield of Maryland's processing times were uniformly longer than HCFA (Health Care Financing Administration) standards."

Further, in the official correspondence from HCFA to Blue Cross and Blue Shield, HCFA added that, "Blue Shield of Maryland has been ranked among the poorest performing carriers in the nation in recent years (Fourth poorest in fiscal year 1983 and third poorest in fiscal year 1984)..."

Thus, as this project is evaluated, it seems that it benefits Blue Cross and Blue Shield more than the elderly. The outcome of six public hearings was the same. The people do not want their health care programs privatized. The facts supporting the opposition are self-evident and if given their due weight, no one would put such an enormous amount of power and influence over Maryland's health care system in the hands of Blue Cross and Blue Shield. However, with an administration that does not let facts get in the way, the outcome could very well be the opposite.

Anthony Armstrong

Measuring black leadership in 1986

LEADERSHIP: THE CAPACITY TO BE A LEADER; ABILITY TO LEAD. The definition above does not say who can lead; it simply states what the person, who would be a leader, should be able to do.

I remember, from my college days, a young man who had tremendous capacities and abilities to lead. The only problem was, he was leading his following into helping him rob banks. The opposite is, I'm afraid, all too true also. For blacks, many of the individuals that occupy positions of leadership, politicians, clergy, business people, do not, or at least, have not demonstrated much of any leadership capability. The result is a race of people, in America, who have not progressed much at all, from our state as slaves.

Certainly, you might disagree with my assessment but, no one can argue the sorry state of black economic, social, and domestic affairs, gripping us in this country today. Further, our plight cannot be laid at the feet of white America, or at the door of the White House. The plight of the black person in America today must, in large part, be placed right where it belongs, with blacks and particularly with black leaders.

For blacks, leadership and black leaders have become the bane of the 80's. One should recognize, early on, that those among us who are our leaders, in too many cases, shouldn't be and; those who do have the capacity and the ability to lead, seldom, because of that very ability, get a chance to be our leaders. We should also recognize that someone other than you and me is the one that picks our leadership, thrust them on us and, then offers "Here, here is your leader for this or for that."

A stupid person could understand that there is no way a people as strong as North American blacks are (we must be strong, look at what we've survived) could be held down for so long without the direct and knowing collaboration of spies and traitors within our own race, who work to maintain our vassal status. These people do their "inside work" for, as the title of an old Clint Eastwood movie tells, a few dollars more.

They do their dirty work, against you and me and ultimately against themselves with no regard for the fact that institutions must always be bigger than those who run them. Too much of black leadership is, as the result, "me!" leadership. A rude example of this is the Provident Hospital mess, where one former member of that institution's board was overheard to say, "I don't care what happens to Provident Hospital as long as my man is in control."

This isn't leadership, this is selfish petty aggrandizement.

Leadership is an earned accolade. It does not follow that the newly appointed this or the newly appointed that will be blessed with the stuff of leadership. Yet, too many of us think that because we preach well, we lead well; that because we've been elected to something we automatically can lead something; that because the mouth is big and loud, the leadership will pour forth as if Alexander The Great were talking.

What we get from this type of mentality is, all too often, the kind of situation that leads us to a cliff, that we are told to jump off, while the "leader" stands back and counts us as we go.

At the bottom line, however, people get the quality of leadership that they demand. People must remember that it is their decision as to who will lead them. Given this, we need to ask ourselves, "Who is in the driver's seat?" Our thinking is not much different than a customer who believes he should be thanking the merchant for the opportunity to spend his money.

Obviously, it's the merchant who should be thanking the buyer. We think we ought to be saying; "Oh, thank you great leader." What we should be asking is, "What did you do, Mr. Leader, show me the results of your actions, tell me how it advances my causes."

Things have become so bad that we don't even question our leaders anymore. In fact, part of being a black leader is that you, the leader, are not even allowed to question; it's considered disloyal. Just as we don't question, we also find it very hard to rid ourselves of bad leadership. Our leaders tend to plant themselves in positions and hold on well past any period of usefulness.

A new year is here and 1986 must include a better, more result based, way of being us. Let's start by measuring our leadership.

Commentary

Are we an African people?

By Imari Abubakari Obadele, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Political Science

Recently the District of Columbia unit of the International Council of African Women held a meeting to discuss ways of implementing strategies for women of color, which were developed in connection with the United Nations' international women's conference in Kenya last July.

A major conference of African women in 1990, projected for a country on the African continent, was discussed. One of the issues which the D.C. planners prepared to meet is a question on the African continent as to whether black women in America, being, as one discussion paper put it, of "mixed heritage," are African.

Those who believe that blacks in the United States, of all colors, having settled this question for themselves in the 1960s also settled it for the world, may be helped by a visit to Political Science 101 and its sometimes arcane definitions.

It hardly needs to be mentioned, to begin with, that how "un-mixed" any

Continued on page 5

G. James Fleming

Korean merchants set good example

Korean merchants in Baltimore are to to be commended for their thoughtfulness in giving 1,000 Christmas baskets needy blacks through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People— a gift accepted readily and smilingly by the NAACP's regional director, Dr. Emmett C. Burns.

The merchants, members of the Korean Businessman's League, recognized the rightness, and smartness, of giving something back to the communities from which they obtain their sustenance.

Getting around the city, however, one could find several kinds of reaction from blacks to the Christmas gesture of the Koreans.

Some were, of course, very appreciative, but others "wondered" if the Korean businessmen were "not just trying to buy the good graces" of blacks; still other resented "these Koreans who, a few years after arriving here, are in business everywhere, even taking over Lexington Market."

Incidentally, a number of black label all Asians in business as Koreans, whether they are Chinese, Japanese, Cambodians, Laotians or Filipinos.

Perhaps number and quality make the difference, as in the Lexington Avenue Market or the neighborhood grocery store. When, in the past, one or two Chinese were running a hand laundry or chop suey place, there was little resentment against them. But, the present breed of Asian businessmen is several notches above their brothers of past years. In addition to their numbers, they bring much know-how as to business matters and they learn anything in a hurry (For instance, they can turn out a soul food dinner second to none).

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There are a number of myths about the Korean businessmen. There is no evidence that they secure any special favors from banks when seeking loans; there is no evidence that they are operating their businesses with "taxpayers" money given or loaned them by the U.S. government"; there is no evidence that they obtained their market stalls or storefronts in any cut-throat competition against potential black businessmen.

It is true that these Koreans—many of them now American citizens— brought experience in many skills to the United States when they migrated here; it is true that many of them had been in business or worked in business enterprises before they left their Asian homes, and it is true, also, that they are willing to devote long hours and often do the kind of work, that native Americans are adverse to doing.

(The latter is not too different from the reasons why "migrant labor" must be imported to harvest American crops in many parts of the country; we Americans, regardless of race or color, are just not going to do certain kinds of work. This unwillingness explains also why many thousands of Chinese were brought in to lay the East-West railroads).

• • •

What is wrong with Korean merchants trying to win friends and influence the people in the communities where they conduct their enterprises? The answer is: "Nothing at all." Everybody else—almost everybody else—is similarly indulging in whatever "P.R.," advancement, and promotions considered necessary or competitively mandatory.

Those who are not exerting themselves to make friends and influence their clientele, and win new customers, are on the way to end up "in the red."

Could it be that some black businesses find hard sledding because their respective entrepreneurs are not paying enough attention to doing the very things the Koreans are doing?

Following the pattern of the Korean businessmen (being a "copycat") should not be limited only to "P.R.," but might go along the entire gamut of the practices, as, for instance:

1. The close involvement and cooperation of one's family in his or her business endeavor, especially in the beginning years;
2. The finding of a way to provide customers with what they want;
3. Following the highest standards of business practice, meeting obligations, keeping one's word, etc.;
4. The knowledge that the operator of a small business can seldom enjoy the luxury of an eight hour working day;
5. Learning all one can, however it is learned, about the business in which one is engaged.

Many black business people already follow these principles to high degree—principles which have spelled success for them and their enterprises. These black men and women, also, are worth learning from, copying, imitating. Just as important, these veterans stand ready to help any budding young man or woman who is serious about conducting a business.

Just Thinking

By Al Sweeney

Black men unite in '86

The Holiday Season has been the finest enjoyed by this writer in many years.

Thanks to friends, readers, relatives, and associates, I honestly look forward to 1986 with relish and optimism.

The parties, the phone calls and the expensive greeting cards all stimulated the upbeat feeling.

The refreshing sight of Howard law students receiving a generous gifts from John Oleander's law firm and the Howard Law School being recipient of a substantial grant, was inspiring.

Luke Moore, my favorite jurist, and Judge William S. Thompson, everyone's popular jurist, presented several awards at the ceremony.

Oleander's firm has hit many medical practitioners with huge malpractice verdicts in the local courts.

Percival Luney, recently retired from the Department of Agriculture, is now teaching at Duke University, he indicated in his Christmas card.

Luney, an outstanding agriculturist, never pursued his field of study at the federal agency.

Instead of laboring in the field of agricultural research and development, Luney was shunted aside to equal employment opportunity duties.

The best reading in our daily paper by the writers of black perspective columns over the movie "The Color Purple."

The movie producers are acclaimed by certain groups as making a "serious film about blacks." At least this is what Dorothy Gilliam asserted.

Gilliam, let me hasten to insert, is a good friend and a writer whom I greatly respect. She, is a socially-conscience writer usually bearing the banner for black femmes.

So it wasn't surprising that she "stood up and cheered" when the film ended.

Written by black author Alice Walker, her literary work has won financial publishing support and a movie investment.

As long as black women come up with these "epoch" dramas of "real black life" in which the black man is portrayed as a rapist, a wife beater, lazy lout and all of the rest of despicable characterizations, white male investors are interested.

The same newspaper's young black columnist Courtland Milloy took a different view of the "The Color Purple."

While white movie reviewers and black women columnists and black female organizations including Shirley Chisholm's black women's voter organization, endorsed it, Milloy hurled typographic darts.

I heartily applaud Milloy's observation.

"I got tired, long ago of white men publishing books by black women about how screwed up black men are. Those same white men get intimidated when a black man writes a book saying that the real problem is the white man."

Young Milloy in his "telling-like-it-is" comment "...that some black women surely will enjoy having black men depicted as brutal bastards."

As the result of this mixed reaction towards "The Color Purple," I went to see the flick.

In the words of Milloy: "Hollywood, you make me sick to my stomach."

It is black exploitation at its worse.

I am proud of my brothers in the NAACP, who picketed the Los Angeles theaters where it was shown.

I am proud of the young, unhappy group of black women, many of whom I love dearly, have become so frustrated with their male relationships in their climb up the occupational ladder that they have joined white men in the destruction of black males.

It's time for blacks to join my movement of BMU.

BMU stands for Black Men Unite or we will disappear with the Bison, the Buffalo or the Dinasour.

When my good public relationist, Jimmy Williams, leads the National Urban League distribution of posters aimed at black youth cautioning:

"Don't make babies, unless you can become a good father," it is the ultimate.

Black Men Unite.

It appears that the civil rights movement has freed everyone but black males. Once, it was said only "white men and black women" were the only free persons in the U.S.

The Civil rights movement has freed "white women" into the mainstream of the workforce and are the biggest beneficiaries of upward mobility, as black men remain wallowing in the job dungeon.

As one of those federal annuitants whose COLA of three percent was cancelled by the politics of the day, I still feel optimistic. It didn't diminish the appreciation of the Christmas card that I received from The President and the First Lady.

—AFRO SURVEY—

What New Year's resolution did you make?

Raberm Bey-Adolenaiu

Kathren Johnson

John E. Bryant

Janessa Morant

This week the question to the man and woman in the street is, "What New Year's resolution did you make?"

Raberm Bey-Adolenaiu, 43, bus operator, "My New Year's resolution starts in March because the Zodiac starts in March not January. My New Year's resolution in March is not to be a Negro, black and colored, but to be of my nationality: Moorish."

Kathren Johnson, 36, laundry attendant, "My New Year's resolution this year is to lose 50 pounds. I'm walking a lot more. I'm trying to change my eating habits. I'm eating more salads and non-fattening foods."

John Early Bryant, 65, retired, "I plan on doing just about the same thing. I plan to do a lot more relaxing this year. So, I'm just going to take care of myself a lot more this year."

Janessa Morant, 28, student, "I have not made one just yet. I plan on playing it safe for right now. I don't see a point in making one if you're not going to stick to it."

Daisy Snipes, 48, administrative clerk and student, "I don't believe in making resolutions. I believe that people should do their best all year round so they don't have to make a resolution once a year. And, if people learn to respect, support, and love each other, then we wouldn't need resolutions once a year if they did this."

Billy Spivey, 30, state officer, "I have not made one yet, so I feel that if you have things under control, you don't have to make one."

Barbara Mitchell, 36, inspector, "I plan on losing 50 pounds this year. I plan on joining a health spa. I'm going to go on a diet and stop eating so much."

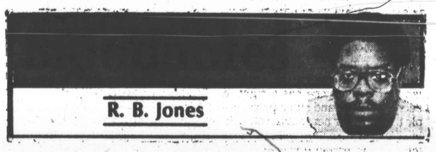
Gloria Irving, 30, sales clerk, "I have not made one yet because I never keep them. But when I do make my choice, it will be to show my love for others."

Daisy Snipes

Bill Spivey

Barbra Mitchell

Gloria Irving



R. B. Jones

Honoring Martin Luther King

Black people have won a hard fought victory in forcing the federal government into making the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. a national holiday. The question that must be asked is was the battle worth it?

Martin Luther King was a great man, flawed as all of us who rose above the contradictions of his privileged upbringing and his ambiguous profession to become one of the great heroes of the struggle for human rights in America.

He did not singlehandedly lead the dismantling of the old style jim crow system in the south as many mythmakers would have one believe. In fact, King was reluctantly drawn into the leadership of the Monigomery Bus Boycott in 1955 by E.T. Nixon, a pullman porter and NAACP activist.

King's eloquence and familiarity with the nonviolent resistance techniques pioneered by Mahatma Ghandi in the Indian independence movement propelled him into the national spotlight.

King eclipsed other leaders who had longer terms of service as the preeminent spokesman for black people in America. Of course King did not speak for all black people.

His philosophy of loving those who hated him and his tactic of nonviolence at all times did not speak to many in his native South such as Robert Williams of Monroe, North Carolina who was expelled from the NAACP and finally driven into foreign exile for organizing armed self-defense actions to protect blacks in his hometown from klan attacks. King's message was not heeded by the deacons for Defense who organized armed patrols to protect demonstrators in Louisiana.

For black people in the north, there was the fiery Malcolm X whose eloquence equaled King's and whose incisive analysis of the philosophy of nonviolence posed a powerful alternative for the black masses. Malcolm X spoke to the aspirations of people wanting freedom without the burden of passively accepting physical abuse from racist white mobs to do it.

King allowed himself to be used by the white establishment to criticize these movements. His almost fanatical devotion to nonviolence and moral suasion blinded him for a long time to the validity of self-defense and alternative strategies for black liberation.

King's ideological inflexibility also caused him to criticize the Black Power Movement in the early stages of that movement. However King eventually reconsidered his position on these issues and came to a reconciliation with Malcoln X before the latter's assassination provided a glimpse of the fate that awaited King himself three years later.

The greatness of King was his ability to inspire them masses to action while capturing the imagination of the other segments of society. He made black demands for justice seem like divine decrees. He put the black church and its ministers on the spot in such a way that they could never again claim that secular issues such as voting rights and social justice were not areas of church concern.

Perhaps the greatest lesson that he taught this society was that injustice and anti-social violence cannot be confined to victimizing one segment of society alone. He raised the point that hatred would gnaw away at the soul of the nation.

"King showed how inextricably interwoven were the economic issues that affected the poor of all races. King illustrated the fact that the same people oppressing the Viet Namese were oppressing blacks and the poor in this country.

"His insights cost him his life. As long as the battles he fought were for integrating public facilities and voting rights, King was tolerable. When he opposed U.S. imperialism in Asia and talked of uniting poor people of all races to fight for a new economic order in America he became too much of a threat to live.

The honor that is due to Martin Luther King on his birthday will not come to him through a national holiday sanctioned by a Congress that would have opposed King at every juncture if he were alive today.

National holidays tend to be either commercial orgies or days of hypocritical piety and historical distortion. They contain little truth and even less meaning for citizens of this nation.

The sight of Martin Luther King Birthday sales is one that I do not look forward to seeing nor do I wish to see the day become one stripped of its meaning reduced to just another excuse for a weekend binge.

Martin's life was one of dedication, perseverance and struggle. He lived a life of service without concern for selfish gain. In spite of his political and strategic flaws he remained until his death a powerful force for change in this society.

Martin belonged to the black community which nurtured him and supported him in the most troubled times. His birthday should be our day to honor him and remember his words and deeds. It should have remained our celebration, in-house.

The government that harassed him and very likely had something to do with his death cannot sincerely honor Martin. They are the ones trying to dismantle the very gains that his blood was spent to achieve.

Are we an African people?

Continued from page 4

people may be is a function of the care of scrutiny and the fortunes of conquest. Africans in North America were a mixed people almost from the beginning (1619), since during the slaving era the policy of the slavers was to separate and then mix persons who arrived in chains from the various states of West Africa, the Congo, and even East Africa.

This "New African" who resulted from the African mixture was further set apart by the infusion of European genes (the slavemasters generally left their children with their African mothers) and various Indian genes, resulting from many voluntary communications with the Indians.

Whatever the pathos which attended this 250-year process—and it was great—the process, covering the years between 1619 and 1865, resulted in a people who are African, albeit a new branch of the great African family, situated in a distant land.

As the prophets of the 1960s put it, Blackness or African-ness is not just a matter of color, although it is that first; it is, also, a matter of culture and consciousness.

But the debate on the continent is influenced by concepts of the state and nation-building which are not readily perceived by those educated in the United States.

The state must be understood as that structure which exercises sovereignty—i.e., ultimate control over a defined area of space, using habit, persuasion, and police forces to maintain internal peace and order, and using the army and diplomacy to protect against external attack.

What the state protects, however, is the people and their established way of life. That way of life is fundamentally represented by the social structure, which perpetuates an ordered constellation of beliefs, and the economic structure, which perpetuates interests related to wealth.

It is the social structure, or society, with its values, which creates, through time, a collective personality—a nation. A nation must evolve; this collective personality (which the state defends) can only come about over time, by people who are associated with a given land mass being fused together by shared experiences.

States, of course, can be created instantaneously, as when Thomas Jefferson and company declared the United States, as a state, in existence on July 4th, 1776, to protect the white nation which had evolved on this side of the Atlantic Ocean with values and interests distinct from England's.

The state, which could do nothing other than reflect the reality of the white society which had called it into existence and which it was designed to protect, changed in stages. By the Civil War and the Fourteenth Amendment of 1868 the white state opened its membership to citizenship, to the New African people.

In 1898 it opened to children of Chinese born here, and in 1924 Indians born on reservations were deemed to be U.S.

JAN 1986