EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
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July 4, 1990

As every school child knows, July 4, 1776, was the date the Declaration of Independence was signed, marking the birthdate of the United States of America, and signalling the beginning of a new era for the former British colony.

Simple arithmetic shows that this occurrence happened 214 years ago, and points up the young existence of this country in a historical context which measures the existence of civilized man in thousands of years.

Independence is equated with freedom in the minds of most people, however such is not always the case. A vivid example is the plight of Blacks in this country whose status remained the same for more than 60 years, despite the independence of America from British rule.

Thus, while celebrating the "rockets red glare . . . bombs bursting in air" which is traditional on Independence Day, at least a fleeting thought should be directed towards the achievement of freedom as concomitance with independence.

". . . Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished!"

Getting to Mandela

Last Wednesday, June 20, some 40-odd owners and reporters from the Black media went to New York at the invitation of Fenton Communications and Mayor David Dinkins to meet ANC Deputy leader Nelson Mandela. The meeting never took place due to a myriad of blunders.

But Sunday four days later, when Mr. Mandela came to Washington, these same owners and reporters and their counterparts from all over the country sat down with Mr. Mandela for a face to face talk for over one half hour. The difference between New York and Washington, D.C. was a team of women, including Debbie Speights, and Jakki Dennis, press advance from the D.C. Welcoming Committee. What they did should be a blueprint for those from other cities to follow.

Policemen, FBI and CIA agents are only used to seeing one or two Black reporters in a pool of a dozen or so White reporters, but when they see a whole contingent of Black journalists from all over the country they panic. They panicked in New York and they panicked in Washington.

Fortunately for us, that team of women was ready for this kind of prejudice. They made sure we got through the maze at the Madison Hotel and up the winding stairway to the second floor, despite the efforts of our mostly White brothers trying to stop us each step of the way.

Our press members understand the need for the tight security around Mr. Mandela, but we also know that courtesy demands that when any group of people say "I have an appointment," the smart thing to do is to check with higher-ups. This police refused to do on their walkie talkies either in New York or Washington. In New York we didn't make it but in Washington things were different.

It therefore made our hearts sing with joy as stately Jakki Dennis with her walkie-talkie and security label guided us through the maze of agents and police. Their, "Here you can go up there" was met by Miss Dennis' quiet, efficient "I'm leading the way."

Thanks to this efficiency, the wishes of Mr. Mandela were carried out and the Black press was able to see a true fighting spirit in a relaxed atmosphere.

Mr. Mandela in his meeting with us, was relaxed and warm. He looked good in his grey suit and had a twinkle in his eye when he answered Washington AFRO publisher Frances Murphy about his health with a suggestion that "she have a ball so that he could show her what he could do."

As the Black press left the hotel, some were still griping about the fact that they had to wait across the street from the hotel as the press corps did in New York .. the main difference was that in Washington the meeting did take place with the Black press and Mr. Mandela, and from our viewpoint that is all that matters.

Thank you Debbie Speights for a job well done.

Racism has roots in 'science'

By Curtis Jones

I have talked with a lot of African-Americans about the roots of racism in the United States, and few are aware of the hidden source of much of this racism.

This is extremely dangerous, because if we don't spot the correct source of racism we will never be able to fix it.

One expects a racist to be ignorant, and indeed most are. But what about the supposedly well educated person who, despite his education, chooses to exert his influence to suppress an entire category of people because of color, faith or nationality? Since this person is not "ignorant," why is he willing to be racist?

The answer is "scientific racism." This is the false and fraudulent attempt by certain "scientists" to explain why one race or nationality is genetically inferior or superior to another. Scientific racism was popular in Nazi Germany and ultimately brought everlasting shame to the Third Reich.

The Germans called it "racial hygiene": Purifying the genes of the race to create the perfect man while suppressing, and eventually killing those whose genes they didn't like.

Scientific racism actually started long before the Nazis, and can be traced to the beginning of psychology and psychiatry.

Benjamin Rush, the "father of American psychiatry," claimed that the black skin of African-Americans was caused by a "rare" form of leprosy. Despite the fact that Dr. Rush labelled all Black men lepers, the American Psychiatric Association displays his face on their seal.

In the early 1900's, psychologists used IQ tests to claim that African-

COMMENTARY

American children were incapable of learning things that Whites could learn, and on the basis of this "scientific" racism, tax money for schools for African-Americans was cut to almost nothing. We are still paying the price for this.

There are a great many examples of rapidly racist psychologists attacking our race as "inferior." How many of us have heard the false "scientific" pronouncements of these racists over the years without knowing where they came from?

Even today, scientific racism continues. Dr. Rush's leprosy and other early racist claims are known to be the lies that they are. But still, in schools like Harvard, psychologists such as Richard Herrnstein work non-stop to convince others that there are inherent genetic differences between people, particularly between Blacks and Whites. Why do they have this fixation on genetic differences, or genetic "unequality" between races?

The answer is so blaring that it hurts. If two races are equal, then neither one is better than the other, right? Anyone pushing racism has to smash the idea of equality, and what better way to do that than through the false "science" of psychology?

Psychological tests have been used for 80-years to undermine African-Americans' hopes for equal rights in America. While we've been trying to gain equality, the psychologist has been covertly doing what he could to make it impossible for us. It is time we recognize precisely who it is that has been giving us such a hard time.

Curtis Jones, of the Citizens Commission on Human Rights, is a columnist who writes on issues pertaining to psychiatric and psychological abuse.For information call 213-667-2901

DO THE WRITE THING

Aidswalk '90

On behalf of the AIDSWALK '90 Steering Committee, the Health Education Resource Organization, other NIV/AIDS service providers benefitting from the walk, and the many persons living with HIV disease whom we serve, I would like to thank the more than five thousand walkers who supported AIDSWALK '90 and the countless number of sponsors who pledged money on their efforts for all of us.

We are also grateful for the corporate sponsors who supported this event with their money and their feet; Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Maryland, WJZ-TV, the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper, and the Patuxent Publishing Company.

We are appreciative of the support given by our co-sponsors; V-103 and The Baltimore Business Journal. Without their vision and partnership AIDSWALK '90 would never have been the tremendous success it was.

This year's Walk was a great success to the extent that our ranks grew. Those who walked are more apt to get involved and volunteer to perform other important tasks in the fight against HIV disease. AIDSWALK '90 symbolized much caring and love by many people in the community for those who have died and those who are infected.

It symbolized our unity in the face of discrimination, prejudice, and ignorance. It symbolized our perseverence in serving those who need us despite the lack of an adequate response from local and federal government.

And so we thank the women and men, boys and girls, lesbian/gays and straights, companies and individuals, people of many races and religions, for coming out to walk with us on June 10th. We made a difference and there is no turning back!

ANDREW A. BARASDA, JR.
Executive Director

On political issues

In the edition, dated June 23, 1990, I "read" a letter from The Coalition for Political Accountability, which seems to be targeting Cong. Kweisi Mfume.

It points out that he may not be doing the job, that is expected of him. But since this consensus represent some individual and not all people. I, too urge the voters to check the records for themselves; Not just the record of Congressman Mfume, but the records of all our political leaders as well as the other candidates.

I will go one step further, I will suggest that we check our own records as voters. I know that the district in which I live has a very low voter participation in the pass few years.

I am also under the impression that very few of us know where to call, or write to express concern on any political issue. I say that our leaders can only do what they believe we would have them do.

So unless we make our voices heard by calling, or writing our representatives and letting them know what we want.

As well as exercising our right to vote for the candidate of our choice. I submit that we will continue to get what we give. Nothing????

RONALD N. BAILEY

LETTER

The Barry Lesson

I am responding to the editorial "The Barry Lesson" in the June 9 issue. These are scary times. I see a repeat of history and it seems that most of our people, especially the "educated" ones will quote Dr. Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream" when I attempt to point out historical parallels.

Every African- American should read *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* by Joel Williamson.

He writes, "Indeed, from the White point of view, one might say that the Negro-as-scapegoat has been one of the nation's most valuable renewable resources. Lynching soon developed sophisticated variations."

He also writes, "In all regions, when Black people in large numbers have become relatively assertive in their pursuit of a fair share of the good things in life, White people have proved themselves ready for violence."

White politicians and newspapers worked hand in glove to disfranchise us after Reconstruction under the cover of protecting the White woman from the "Negro rapist beast." But today it is protecting society from the drug addicted criminal.

I do not know what it will take to wake us from our zombie-like state. I feel that most of us will not wake up because Christianity has taught us to love Whites, our enemy, better than we love ourselves; I still hear African Americans call Minister Louis Farrakhan a teacher of hate. So, the only consolation I can find comes from the fact that we are not only Black people on this earth.

Gloria P. Hemphill
Washington, D.C.

The Afro-American
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COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

Ron Daniels
Vantage Point

Racism blinds many to enemies

The ruling elite of America has used racism and ethnic chauvinism to divide various racial, ethnic and religious groups in the interest of preserving the privileges and power of the rich and the super rich. The American political economy thrives on greed, profiteering and the exploitation of the many by the few.

African Americans have often been the most visible and convenient scapegoats for the failure of the American capitalist system to deliver on the false promise of the American dream to large numbers of White poor and working people.

Put another way, fueling racism and racial antagonish is a useful means of masking the exploitation of those at the bottom of the economic pyramid, particularly White poor and working people.

This said scenerio of divide and exploit is an integral part of American history.

During the era of slavery, plantation owners would hire out some of their slaves to business owners in nearby villages and towns. Predictably cheap slave labor undercut free labor thereby driving down wages.

That is to say the wages of "free" White workers was pegged to what a White business owner could hire a Black slave for from a White plantation owner.

It was the Black slaves, however, who were the object of bitter resentment on the part of White laborers.

It seldom occurred to White laborers that it was the White plantation owner in collusion with other White business owners who were really responsible for the suppressed wages and declining economic fortunes of the White workers.

Racism blinded White workers from seeing the real enemy.

In the South after Reconstruction an elaborate system of Black codes and Jim Crow laws were enacted as psychological and material measures to appease poor White farmers and workers. Poor Whites relished the psychological and material benefits of Jim Crow.

However, poor Whites were in fact the victims of a conscious scheme by the White establishment to suppress the wages of White workers by using the former slaves as a lever to keep wages low.

The effort to organize labor is another case study of the rich and powerful utilizing racism to divide and conquer. When White workers began to organize, Black workers were generally excluded from the labor movement because of racism.

White business interest, however, driven by the profit motive and the quest to maintain the economic upper hand, had no difficulty in abandoning their White workers.

Conveniently ignoring race, White businesses hired Black workers as strike breakers in hopes of defeating the labor movement. White racial solidarity was ignored in the interest of profit, power and privilege for the White captains of industry and commerce.

White workers, however, more often than not saw Black workers as the problem instead of their White bosses who were manipulating Black and White workers in order to retain economic power.

It is one of the great tragedies of American history that most White Americans have not grasped the reality of their exploitation by their own wealthy, kith and kin.

Right up to this moment, African Americans are still being subjected to attacks on the Black agenda and singled out as the targets of racial animosity and racist violence.

Many White poor and working people, indeed many White Americans, period, perceive Black people as the source of their economic woes and maladies.

Meanwhile the real enemy, the White minority of the rich and super rich who constitute America's ruling elite, continues to exploit poor and working people in general, confident that the blinders of racism will isolate them from attack by a befuddled and victimized White poor and working class.

One has to wonder when "Joe Sixpack" and the Archer Bunkers of America will take off the blinders to see that African Americans are not their real enemy.

Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

Madness in the air

I don't know about you, but environmentalists, conservationists, and animal rights loonies are getting on my nerves.

What's worse, the White House and Congress are paying attention to them. You say, "Okay, Williams, What's the beef? What do you have against these wonderful earth and animal huggers? They just want to make things right?"

Ingrid Newkirk, director of People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), intones, "The smallest form of life, even an ant or a clam, is equal to a human being." Thus the justification to harass, threaten, burglarize, and destroy medical research facilities.

It's also the justification to trivialize human tragedy. Ms. Newkirk advises, "Six-million Jews died in concentration camps, but six-billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughter houses."

This vision is also the excuse to torch fur stores and spray paint women wearing fur coats. The animal rights people don't impress me with this kind of cowardly terrorism. I'd be more impressed hearing news of their spray painting and slashing animal skins worn by the Hell's Angels.

Animals are not equal to humans. If animals have any human trait, it's racism. Don't believe me? Just watch a cat walk by a dog. The dog terrorizes the cat solely because it's a cat.

But don't feel sorry for cats, they act racist too. Just let a mouse walk by a cat and see what happens. I wonder whether animal rights people support animal racism.

Environment/conservation loonies get Congress to do things that kill us. The use of asbestos has been banned even though it poses very little health risk.

The EPA orders its removal at a cost of $9 billion per year even though its removal is a greater health hazard. According to columnist Warren Brookes, Congress listening to asbestos loonies caused the Challenger disaster.

NASA and Thiokol used to use an asbestos - based putty to seal rocket O-rings. Fearing lawsuits they stopped. In the first 12 flights, after the asbestos putty ban, there were four occurrences of O-ring erosion.

Dr. Malcolm Ross of the U.S. Geological Survey said, "There is no doubt in my mind that the Challenger disaster was caused by the EPA's asbestos paranoia."

Aflatoxin, a soil fungus that affects grains, is a known cancer - causing agent, which had been effectively treated through the use of the fumigant ethyl dibromide (EDB).

The environmental loonies got Congress to ban the use of EDB. Now much of our grain is suspected to be contaminated with dangerous levels of aflatoxin.

The ban on EDB puts consumers at 1,000 times greater health risk. EDB is reported to be only one half as carcinogenic as the chloroform levels in most tap water.

The asbestos and EDB stories were easily found by Warren Brookes. But I bet you never heard about it in the news media sympathetic to the environmental/conservationist loonies.

Samuel Banks
Educator

Tragedy of Barry

The ignominious and fateful circumstances which prompted Mayor Marion S. Barry of Washington, D.C. to announce he will not be a candidate for re-election represents a monumental personal tragedy for him, his family and the legion of supporters who stood firmly behind him through the years.

Mayor Barry, after five years of intense, unrelenting and meticulous investigation by Federal officials, has been a point which has occasioned bitterness, disappointment and anger among a broad spectrum of Black Americans in D.C. and across the nation.

Black Americans, as must be readily understood, do not condone wrong - doing on the part of Black elected officials, but do, given the long history of clearly documented cases of separate and unequal treatment and racism in our nation, believe Barry was not treated fairly or justly in the course of the five year investigation of him by former U.S. Attorney Joseph di Genova, and the current U.S. Attorney for D.C., Jay Stephens, and the FBI.

Fundamental and overarching issues emerge: Why was it necessary to spend huge sums of the taxpayers' money, estimates run as high as $20 million, in order "to catch" Mayor Barry? Why was it necessary, at taxpayers' expense to fly Ms. Rasheeda Moore to Washington and to ensconce her in the Vista Hotel as a means of enticing or inducing Barry to do drugs?

Why did the media, print and electronic, over a five year period, subject Barry to so much prominent and visible coverage as regards allegations of misconduct?

In point of fact, Mayor Barry's coverage by the media paralleled the saturnine and disgraceful demise of former President Richard Milhous Nixon and former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

In recent history, the conviction of Colonel Oliver North for his meretricious and execrable behavior in lying to his superiors and shredding public documents, without authorization, did not command broad - scale public denunciation.

In point of face, he was hailed as a national hero by broad segments of the larger White community even after his conviction.

A court of law is the place in our nation for a person to be adjudged guilty or innocent. The perception which courses through many Black Washingtonians and Black citizens in other areas or our nation is that Mary Barry was "tried" in the media long before his formal arraignment.

The perception, too, exists that he has been treated unjustly and unfairly. Perception can often be viewed as more potent and decisive in the thinking of people.

Whatever the real and substantive issues are in Barry's case, a jury of his peers will now have an opportunity to work their will. This process, in a free society committed to the rule of law, should now be able to run its course.

There exists another tragic dimension to Barry's decision not to stand for re-election. I have reference to the meteoric, euphoric and dramatic rise to power of Barry from pastoral, ITA BENA, Mississippi to mayor of the most powerful and influential Capitol City in the world.

His ascent to power was a source of immense pride to Black citizens in Washington, D.C. and throughout the United States. As the first Black elected mayor of Washington, D.C., Barry was able to do much, in his first two terms, to help the elderly, guarantee summer jobs for students and to serve as a vigorous advocate for decent, safe and sanitary housing for the poor.

As painful as the present situation may be for Mayor Barry's constituents, the time is now at hand when obstreperous lamentations, hand-wringing and a sack cloth and ashes approach must come to an end, and the process of human renewal, racial reconciliation and amity and sound judgment must prevail.

Whatever the final outcome of Barry's case, it must be clearly understood that the failure of one individual is not the failure of an entire race.

COMMENTARY

Colleges in black and white

By Carolyn L. Bennett, Ph.D

Fifteen years ago we were fretting about the coming demise of historically Black colleges. We fretted about predominantly White colleges siphoning off our best and brightest students.

Now we're worrying about the treatment of Black students on predominantly White campuses and wondering whether they should return to historically Black colleges.

I suggest to you, however, that the critical issues we face are social and educational and they are somehow embedded in the relationship between institutions of higher learning

The plight of Black students or Black colleges is not the critical issue. I dont know whether Black colleges will survive or whether Black students should return to historically Black colleges.
ly Black colleges.

I do know that the condition of society at large is at issue. And that universities contribute to social problems by reflecting society's segregationist tendencies, instead of demonstrating the ideals of integration and pluralism.

American society is segregated and virtually every college in the United States is segregated. Historically Black colleges are more that 90 percent Black and predominantly White colleges are more than 80 percent White. The percentage of Black students on White campuses is usually somewhere between 1 and 12 percent; on Black campuses the percentage of White students is 1 to 5 percent. Even in institutions in which desegregation is attempted, segregation persists internally and intercollegiately.

Boards of Regents in some university systems haveintegrated on paper by bringing historically Black colleges into a predominantly White system. But faculties within the system remain segregated.

Black and White colleges within a geographical region remain segregated. And no attempt is made to demonstrate the doctrine of pluralism or to teach through the practice of integration

Has anyone ever heard of an interracial student or faculty exchange among colleges in a geographical region or within a university system?

With all the racial strife that is publicized in the news media, has any college reported that its faculty is working on a curriculum in integration and pluralism with a local college of a different race or ethnic group or religion?

I believe that in order for the condition and climate of society to change and with it the climate on campuses, institutions of higher learning must alter their role: start leading society, instead of reflecting it. I believe colleges, Black and White, should take on the responsibility for informing society and raising it to a higher level of functioning.

I believe colleges should, by their example, actively foster interracial unity and harmony and interrelatedness and establish a climate in which people of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and social groups embrace a common civilization while maintaining an autonomous participation in the development of their traditional culture or special interest.

Any reasonably intelligent person knows that separate is inherently unequal. Colleges know it. But when they reflect, instead of leading society, they act as if they don't know that separate is inherently unequal.

And that the issue of inequality goes farther than unequal financing or unequal access to quality education defined in terms of traditional curriculum, relative levels of professorships or the prestige of institutions.

Equality or unequality goes to the issue of whether a person who graduates from any college, Black or White, has learned how to integrate himself into the society, how to live in harmony, engage and meaningfuly interact with people of different cultures and backgrounds who make up the society.

When colleges segregate within one campus or segregate from other colleges within a geographical region, they deprive students of quality education by failing to set the example of a fully functioning community.

Not long ago I was looking over U.S. News and World Report's compendium of America's Best Colleges. And I thought to myself: these are the colleges that are best able to lead society.

Surely America's finest are not afraid to formulate and implement a joint curriculum on integration and pluralism.

I envisioned Black and White colleges working together on a living curriculum: Emory, Georgia State, Morehouse and Spelman in Atlanta; Chicago State and Loyola in Chicago; Xavier and the University of New Orleans; Jackson State University and Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi;

Missouri Baptist College and Webster University in St. Louis; City and York Colleges and the College of Staten Island, Lehman, and Columbia University in New York; Lincoln and Temple in Pennsylvania.

These colleges, I thought, could bring the spirit of invention and experiment, the thirst for knowledge to the issue of integration and pluralism. Faculties within these schools could use their relationships with one another to set the example. And in developing a living curriculum, through shared feelings, experiences, and attitudes, they could expand and broaden knowledge in ways that history books and specialized textbooks could never do.

Our society needs both White and Black experience, and it needs the great debates and interactions and changed perceptions that emerge from exchanges in Black and White.

Separate schools, operating separately, but cooperatively in the one area of pluralism and integration could bring to bear an important influence on college and society that would eliminate racial strife and remove the question of whether students should attend White or Black colleges.

There is richness in Black and White that wastes away while scholars on segregated campuses debate the relative merits on Black and White colleges, wring their hands in the face of racial strife, and accomplish nothing that is both socially and educationally significant.

*** Dr. Carolyn L. Bennett is a writer and former educator who lives in Northern Virginia.**