EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Frances M. Draper
President

Virginia Beach debacle

Whenever an excessively large throng of young people gather in a vacation resort, it is frightening to the local residents, who can only see this as a threat to their well being and businesses.

The eruption at Virginia Beach over the Labor Day weekend can be traced, in part, to the excessive show of force by police and military personnel. Sending in troops and police in full riot gear shows a complete lack of respect for the Black students who came to the area for a weekend of fun.

Overlooked in the aftermath of the woeful occurrences is the way the city viewed the Labor Day Greekfest before it happened. The city refused to rent the Pavilion for activities. In nearby Norfolk, promoters were rejected in attempts to stage a concert. At Hampton, plans for a concert were canceled at the last minute because of security worries.

This left no centralized activity for the college students searching for their final fling before the grind of the school year begins. So what happens when an estimated 100,000 young people gather with nothing to do—chaos.

The attitude seemingly prevalent among the town residents was an aura indicating the Greekfest was unwelcome and a massive security force was needed to keep order. And that's what they got.

In retrospect, it is obvious that troops in riot gear exacerbated an already tense situation. Police were ticketing youngsters whosesale for such minor violations as jaywalking — or playing music too loud — reports of bystanders being prodded and clubbed with riot sticks were prevalent.

The comparison with the treatment of the White youngsters who descended on the Ft. Lauderdale, FL beach at Spring break, points up the differences in treatment. There are hundreds of arrests made there each year, but despite the inundation of youths in the area, battle lines have not been drawn—it is treated as an unwelcome prank, but not of such serious proportions to necessitate calling out the national guard in riot gear.

The Virginia NAACP says the use of excessive force was racially motivated at Virginia Beach, and the organization is investigating for possible civil rights violations. On the final night of the weekend, police, in full riot gear, used attack dogs against the youths.

No one condones rioting and looting. Such lawlessness deserves punishment. Psychologists will debate for years the reasons why such activity erupts. A sharp look should be taken at the underlying causes—why there was a Virginia Beach, Vineland, N.J. or Bensonhurst.

There is no easy solution to the problem of racism, whether covert or overt, but somehow an answer and a plan of remedial action must be formulated if this nation is to thrive with its people in peace and harmony. We need less rhetoric from our leaders, and more getting down to cases in the struggle. This is a must.

Black attack hatched

We are under attack and nowhere is that fact more evident than in the establishment media.

Watching the news these days one would imagine that Black leaders spend their time committing various and sundry lewd sexual acts; or getting stoned on drugs.

And as for the Black community, well, they spend their time looting and rioting and destroying the calm in otherwise peaceful stretches of the Tidewater, Va. area.

Recent reports involving events in and around our community are very disturbing and more than a little ominous. Not just because of the obvious gravity of their nature, but because it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore that in those pictures and words, rests a startling campaign to discredit and destroy Black leadership and create negative images of our people.

More and more it seems that Black leaders are being singled out for "special investigations." Some dating back 12 years, as in the case of Black Catholic priest and founder of the Imani Temple, Father George Stallings who according to an article in one local newspaper, allegedly had illicit sexual relations with a church member.

Is it a coincidence that this alleged incident surfaced over a decade after it was supposed to have taken place and just after Father Stallings had clashed with and left the powerful Roman Catholic church over the need for a congregation orientated towards African Americans?

And what of besieged Mayor Marion Barry. Almost daily reports surface about his alleged drug use, hinting at legions of dubious or invisible sources willing to attest to its truth.

Reportings of a recent disturbance in Virginia Beach between young Black people attending an annual Greek fraternal gathering and the police/National Guard, too centered the supposed misdeeds of the young people involved.

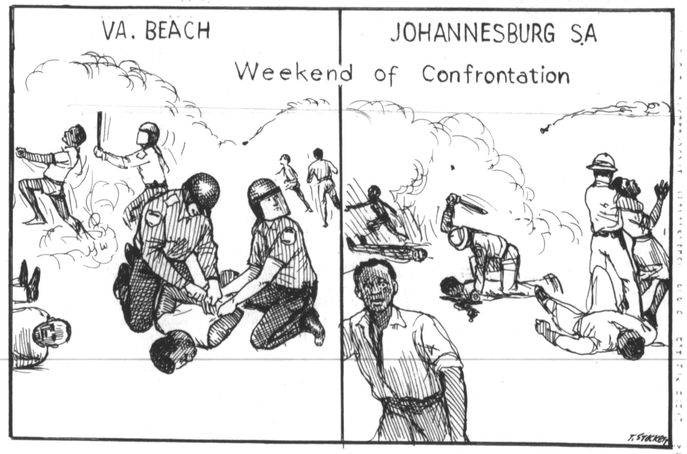
Mystery it seems surrounds the cause of the whole incident, although the mayor of that city did attribute the problem to "too many" people being in town.

Given these examples, even the most cautious Black person must begin to wonder if coincidence can explain away such happenings in our communities.

Can we any longer afford to sit back and be "fair" in the face of such obviously biased treatment?

The answer is a resounding no.

We are under assault; under siege — and burying our heads in the sand will not change that reality or make the problem go away. We must stake out and defend our territory, plan our strategies and fight to win.



Walter E. Williams
Minority Viewpoint

Us and criminals

When are we going to stop politicians, judges, and parole boards from allowing criminals to dictate our lives? Being 53 years old, I have the benefit of remembering when criminals weren't in charge.

Up until the '60s you didn't have to have exact change to get on a trolley car or bus. You just handed the driver a dollar and he'd give you change. Then drivers started getting held up. Instead of catching and imprisoning the robbers, we put passengers to the inconvenience of having exact change.

Department stores used to have numerous exits. In response to widespread shoplifting, they've reduced the number of exits. Again, we're inconvenienced instead of authorities catching and imprisoning thieves. What's more, merchandise prices reflect the steep cost of anti-shoplifting devices that stores must buy.

In the housing project, where we lived, my mother, sister, and I washed clothes in the basement coin-operated washing machine and later hung them out in the community clothes yard. Mom went off to work and we off to school.

After school our job was to gather the clothes. Thieves began breaking into the machines while others stole the clothing; now residents must bear the inconvenience of going to a laundromat.

In the same neighborhood, you could shop for just about anything in a three-mile radius. Besides, you could safely walk to the store day or night.

Today, there are not only no stores of any significance, but even if there were, you wouldn't want to walk, at least not at night. Criminals have put the stores out of business.

Residents, that don't want to get ripped off by Mom & Pop stores, must bear transportation costs to go downtown or to suburban malls.

Politicians, judges, and parole boards treat law-abiding people with contempt. Remember Bernard Goetz, who defended himself against would-be attackers in a New York subway? He was jailed.

Now remember the lady jogger who was raped and beaten into a coma in New York's Central Park? Had she carried a gun and shot her assailants, she would be in jail with Goetz instead of the hospital.

Civil authorities, along with their friends in the anti-gun lobby, would rather have us be victims of brutal assaults and live in fear than defending ourselves against barbarians they put on the streets.

I say hogwash to all of that. As a kid I used to steal money from Mom's piggy bank. When I got caught, and between the lashes, Mom said that she was neither going to lock up nor hide her money and I wasn't going to steal it either.

She didn't hide or lock up the money and I didn't steal it — again. We need to put Mom in charge of our criminal justice system?

Ask any politician about making our streets and homes safe. You'll get an endless list of excuses from "we don't have anywhere to put criminals" to "we don't have enough police."

One of Mom's famous speeches applies here, "If you're doing something you're not supposed to be doing, you're not going to be able to do what you're supposed to be doing." City and state governments spend countless billions of taxpayers' money for handouts for the indiscreet, idle and lazy, massive sports complexes, and one junket or boondoggler after another — things they are not supposed to be spending on.

Therefore, they don't have enough resources to protect the citizens from criminals — which they're supposed to be doing.

The only short-run solution is for law-abiding people to arm themselves and defend when attacked. Like Goetz, I prefer jail to the hospital or morgue. But the long-run solution is to run our political derelicts out of office.

CONG. GUS HAWKINS

Financial aid for the college bound

Although the total share of funds dedicated to education is derived primarily from state and local monies, the federal role is critical in providing resources to boost quality educational services.

This role starts as early as preschool, through the federal Head Start program. It continues throughout elementary and secondary schooling by delivering supportive programs such as the math and reading Chapter I program (the largest federal education program);

Chapter 2 (a general aid block grant with focused guidelines on six areas); drug education; math and science teacher training programs; bilingual education; magnetic schools; and other special programs.

But a quality education doesn't have to stop after high school. Every child should have goals which exceed our tallest skyscrapers. Our expectations for our children should match these lofty ambitions by providing them with the foundation necessary to continue their education, if they so choose.

While post secondary education costs are high, that doesn't mean education after high school is out of reach. The first step is to learn as much as possible about all the programs that can help you pay for those years at school.

You or one of your children, may qualify for one or more of these programs. Again, the federal government plays an important role in providing educational assistance. This year, the federal government will spend $15.2 billion in assistance to students seeking a higher education.

Federal financial aid falls into three basic categories: loans, grants, and work-study. Loans are borrowed money you must eventually pay back with interest. The borrower is provided a grace period after school completion before repayment of the loan begins.

Grants are awards that do not require repayment. Work-study is a program where you work either on-campus or off-campus to earn money to help pay for your educational expenses. Eligibility for these programs is based primarily on your resources.

Contact a financial aid administrator at the various schools you are thinking of attending to find out what other sources are available to help finance your education. You may also want to check with your state education agency to obtain information on financial aid programs available to residents of your state.

Your local public library can provide you with information about a number of alternatives and private sources of financial aid.

Be sure to look into special grant, loan and scholarship programs sponsored by local organizations including foundations, religious groups, civic groups, fraternities and sororities.

An excellent publication published by the U.S. Department of Education entitled "The Student Guide, 1989-90," explains the federal financial assistance packages available and how to apply for them.

For your free copy, send your name, address, and the item number (Item 516V) to S. James, Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

This nation's greatest strength is not its weapons but its people. That is why we must continually stress the importance of education at all levels, and help our fellow citizens realize their full potential.

The Afro-American
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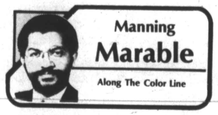
COMMENTARY & OPINIONS



Manning Marable
Along The Color Line

The legacy of Huey Newton

The recent brutal murder of Huey P. Newton in Oakland has been used as a metaphor for the nihilism and ultimate futility of Black militancy.

In a predictable editorial, the **New York Times** pontificated that the co-founder and leader of the Black Panther Party was a self-destructive "prisoner of the Oakland ghetto streets where he grew up".

Other Black Panther leaders had successfully made the transition to the middle class and political conformity, but not the "melancholy" Newton. "He was in and out of prison, in and out of court, in and out of drugs and alcohol abuse.

The message is clear: Newton, and not the system he struggled against, was responsible for his demise.

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since two young, militant Black men, influenced by the uncompromising example of Malcolm X, discussed creating a political formation for self-defense in an antipoverty, office located in East Oakland.

Huey F. Neton was five years younger than his friend Bobby Seale, yet the charismatic Newton developed as the principal leader and spokesperson for the Black Panthers and their youthful cadre.

Their black leather jackets, outlandish rhetoric and tendency to parade with guns gave them an image of urban guerrillas. But an analysis of their original "Ten Point Program" reveals that their immediate objectives were reformist, rather than revolutionary.

The Black Panthors called for self-determination, the right of any people or nation which has been historically oppressed or politically dominated.

They insisted upon full employment, decent housing, an end to police brutality and violations of civil rights, educational reforms, and "freedom for all Black men held in federal, state, county, and city prisons and jails."

With the exception of the last statement, nothing demanded by the Panthers really represented a cry for the violent overthrow of the American legal system, political economy or the powerful elite of White males who control the wealth and poverty within this society.

The Black Panthers did not attack policemen patrolling the Black community without cause, and did nothing to provoke armed assaults against White individuals or White-owned property within the Black community.

By late 1967, the Black Panthers had initiated a free breakfast program for Black children, and were offering medical services to ghetto residents without charge.

And unlike many Black Power-inspired groups, which took the simplistic view that all Whites regardless of their social class or political ideology were the enemy, the Panthers took direct steps to link their struggle for Black self-determination to the Broader currents of social change within American society and throughout the world.

They coalesced with White student and community activists who opposed America's illegal and immoral war in Vietnam, and called for the development of a progressive united front between all oppressed peoples of color and reform-minded Whites to transform this country's economic and political system.

No error ever committed by Newton and the Black Panthers, however, can begin to equal the massive crimes carried out by the U.S. government in the name of law-and-order.

By July 1969, the Black Panthers had been targeted by 233 separate actions under the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program. In 1969 alone, twenty seven Panthers were killed by the police, and 749 were jailed or arrested.

The FBI deliberately manipulated Black nationalist groups to assault the Panthers, sometimes with murderous consequences. In Chicago, Panther Leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were murdered by police in a planned raid.

And in early 1970, the FBI ordered its field offices to "counteract any favorable support in publicity to the Panthers" by placing anti-Panther propadanda in the media.

During these years, Newton was shot, imprisoned, and in exile. That he survived at all, despite this massive conspiracy, is remarkable.

Huey Newton was no saint. A decade before his death, he had acquired a reputation in Oakland as violent and unpredictable. Like all political visionaries, He was a part of his political environment, and was hardened by the murderous assaults committed against his friends and associates by his government.

But Newton offered a path of liberation to his generation of young African-Americans, especially young Black men. Instead of falling victim to gangs and Black-against-Black violence, Newton encouraged young people to organize for justice and community control.

While Black elected officials told African-American youth that the system was inherently just, if only given a chance to work, Newton correctly called for the transformation of power relationships within society.

Poverty, ignorance, homelessness and hunger could not be destroyed, Newton argued, unless the oppressed seized the reins of power. Despite his personal shortcomings and weaknesses, Newton's central insight still remains correct.

Huey P. Newton should be remembered as a contributor to the struggle for Black freedom.

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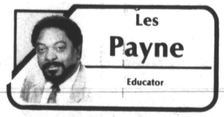

Les Payne
Educator

Huey made us feel like men

Though less than a year in journalism, I had covered the Black Panther Party in the streets from coast to coast and had interviewed other top leaders in jail and out. Though serving a life sentence for killing a cop, Newton seemed even then to be the least Pantheresque of Panthers.

He spoke like no other Panther I knew, avoiding the spirited slogans "demagogic, avaricious blook-sucking pigs" — and most of the profanity that had become trademarks of the organization.

The Panthers' minister of defense went early into prison, a year after he and Bobby Seale had ordered their newly organized black leather - clad troops, armed with shotguns, to protest gun control legislation in Sacramento.

Numbering little more than 30, when Newton went to prison, the Panthers grew into a nationwide party, its ranks swelled by idealistic Black youth, adventurers, firebrands, ex-cons — and undercover police agents.

His family says that Newton was always a fighter, striking back hard in self-defense from the age of five. He was a child of poverty, but of the relatively secure poverty of the type found in the 1940's of black New Orleans.

His father was a day laborer and part-time Baptist minister who admired former Gov. Huey Pierce Long enough to try to name his child after him. It would end up "Huey Percy Newton" on the birth certificate.

"(Gov. Long) was admired not only by my parents, but by blacks generally," said Newton, unhappy with his namesake. "Long was the first governor to put black nurses in state and county hospitals in Louisiana. He managed to please whites in doing so by telling them that he didn't want white nurses attending to n----rs.' "

If one excepts Southern lynchings, Newton's Panthers — before the FBI's counterintelligence program put them out of business—did more in three years to make police brutality an action item on Black America's agenda than all their predecessor civil rights groups, through all the long history of police abuse of Black people.

There was then and is now hardly an aware black person in all America who feels personally secure from extralegal attention by law enforcement officers. By boldly confronting them in the streets, Newton endeared himself to the lowliest brother in the gutter, and to members of the upper classes such as opera diva Leontyne Price.

Comedian and diet tycoon Dick Gregory said back then that, if nothing else, the Panthers made cops tread a little softer in the ghettos.

And, at the news of Newton's murder last week, the Rev. Timothy Mitchell said, "Huey Newton made us all feel more like men."

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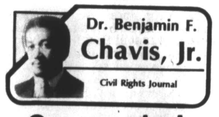

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
Civil Rights Journal

Guess who's not coming to dinner

It will come as no surprise to those of us who are from the African American community that all the experts are in agreement that a "great gulf" separates African Americans from White Americans.

Over the past few weeks no less than four major studies have shown that African Americans "lag significantly behind whites," that racial segregation in America is far deeper than previously thought by social scientists;

That the widening health gap between African Americans and Whites is due in part to racism and low self-esteem among African Americans, and that gaps between African Americans and Whites in employment, income, and education are so broad that parity between the two races is unlikely to occur in this century.

In the recently released report of the National Research Council, it was found that despite social and economic gains made by African Americans over the past 50 years that, "If all racial discrimination were abolished today, the life prospects facing many poor blacks would still constitute major challenges for public policy."

It also found that many of the myths about why African Americans have not progressed are indeed false including the belief that female - headed households, high birth rates to unmarried women, low labor force participation by males or poor academic performance are due solely to government support programs or the existence of a "culture of poverty" among African American poor.

Another study of racial segregation in 10 of the nation's largest cities found that segregation is much more prevalent than social scientists had previously thought.

This study, done by Professor Douglas S. Massey and Dr. Nancy A. Denton at the University of Chicago, concluded that African Americans and Whites in racially segregated cities rarely interact outside the workplace and that African Americans isolated in central cities have even less contact with Whites.

The effect of such deep - seeded segregation is higher poverty, crime and unemployment, according to Dr. Massey. In a recent *New York Times* article, Dr. Massey pointed out the significance of this study, saying:

"Where you live determines the chances you get in this world. It determines the school your children go to, the crime you're exposed to, the peer influences on your children.

"If you're isolated from the mainstream, it's not a fair world, it's not a fair contest. Segregation is structural underpinning of the underclass."

What all of these studies should say to African Americans and White Americans alike is that solving this country's problems of racism must remain on this nation's front burner.

What these studies should say to the Bush administration is that we must focus our nation's attention on making this country of equal opportunity for all Americans.

We can not afford to turn back now.

Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

Silent vigil and death of Huey Newton

The philosophy of the major civil rights organization was and continues to be based on the assumption that Black Americans can achieve full integration into the American society without suffering the loss of our identity.

Full integration into the American society means full equality in that society for Black citizens. These organizations believe that there is a basic decency, a basic fairness in the American psyche that must be appealed to.

Dramatic changes for the better in the lives of Black Americans suggest that this approach was workable. Operating in this philosophy is the theory that, when forced to, White Americans would live by the Constitution, and hence, the basic strategy of civil rights organizations has been a legal one, that is to subject all institutions and practices in White America to the litmus test of constitutionality.

This is not to suggest that other tactics were not used. Protests and mass marches were often launched in situations that were physically threatening to the participants.

However, there persisted the idea that Blacks did not want to destroy American institutions, but rather that we wanted to make them responsive to us, to make them work for Blacks as well as whites.

In sharp contrast, the Black Panther Party, co - founded by Huey Newton, assumed that all of White America had to be considered as the enemy to all Black people.

It believed that all American institutions and practices were designed to oppress Black people through either economic oppression; political oppression; and physical oppression through law enforcement or White mob behavior.

Therefore, the mission of the Black Panther Party was to protect, by all means possible, Black people from a totally oppressive and violent White Society. The Party held that it was futile to appeal to the conscience of White America because it had none insofar as Black citizens were concerned.

An interesting dichotomy. On the one hand, an appeal to the conscience of America, a presisting belief in the ultimate brotherhood of mankind. On the other hand, an appeal to Black pride, an appeal to Blacks' self-protection against the enemy, an America made up of at least two armed camps, one white and one White.

This dichotomy to a lesser degree continues today in Black communities.

Some, beneficiaries of recent gains and because of personal experiences such as living in integrated housing; employment in an integrated workforce; and recreation in an integrated athletic center, still believe that full integration in America is accomplishable.

They will often argue, "now it is not so much race but economics," yet these are the same people who when it is "safe" will articulate that they are painfully aware of racist nuances, racist thinking, racist practices in the world in which they operate.

Let me give an illustration of that sensitivity, based upon an experience I had on Capitol Hill. I had been appointed to a special Congressional Task Force chaired by Congressman Sam Gibbons, a conservative Democrat from Florida, who was an affable, amiable person, who despite our differences I considered to be an able Congressman.

As I entered the crowded meeting room which was dimly lit, I paused in the doorway. Chairman Gibbons called out, "Come on in Mr. Mitchell, it's so dark in here, I can barely see you." This evoked a wave of laughter.

"My Chairman," I said, "If we are to meet in this dimly lit room permanently, maybe it's best that I get off this task force because I want not only to be seen, I want to be heard as a co-equal."

Chairman Gibbons apologized profusely and abjectly. "I swear before God, Mr. Mitchell, "I did not intend my remarks to have racial implications, I swear I didn't, I have too much respect for you."

Perhaps he was honest, but why the wave of laughter that was provoked by his first statement? Did not those who laughed consider his words to have racial implications?

I am not among those who see continued improvements in race relations during the decade of the 90's. Quite to the contrary, I see continued deterioration. I can say this because the sharp contrast between White Americans as potential brothers and White Americans as permanent "enemies" remains.

How can this situation be resolved? I do not have the answers, but this I do know, it will remain in place for as long as there is not effective dialogue, effective communication between White America and Black America.