

From The Grassroots

The Destruction Of Black Education

By Dr. Manning Marable

Dr. Manning Marable teaches political economy at Cornell University's Africana Studies Center, and is an activist in the National Black Independent Political Party. "From The Grassroots" appears in over 135 newspapers in the United States and England. This is part one of a two-part series.

One of the many promises made by Presidential-hopeful Ronald Reagan early in 1980 was a commitment "to improve and to defend" traditionally Black colleges. Unlike President Carter and independent candidate John Anderson, Reagan made substantial overtures to Black educators and administrators at predominately Black Southern institutions. Reagan's chief Black aide, Art Fletcher, was the former director of the United Negro College Fund. The Republican nominee openly embraced the Black College Day demonstration held in Washington, D.C. on September 29, 1980, and charged that "the Carter Administration--in the name of desegregating Black colleges--is forcing them to become schools for training everybody but Blacks." Reagan also promised to encourage corporations to increase their financial support for Black universities and pledged "to work to increase the share of Title III budget allocated to Black colleges."

Under Carter's Administration, Black colleges received a smaller percentage of federal funds going to all universities than the Nixon-Ford years. Black educators had denounced Carter's intention to desegregate two Black Texas colleges, Southern and Prairie View. By late 1979, *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry expressed the widely held view among Blacks that Administration officials "are unfamiliar with the historical role of these (traditionally Black) colleges and are indifferent to the vital service they perform." Given this recent history, many Black college administrators perceived that Reagan's election would mean a real advance for Black higher educational opportunities, despite his economic austerity program and conservative social policies.

The Reagan Administration's first important announcement concerning the fate of Black colleges occurred, appropriately enough, at Tuskegee Institute. Institute President Luther Foster had invited Reagan to be the principal speaker at the April 12, 1981 "Founder's Day" program, marking the one-hundredth anniversary of the Tuskegee Institute. Reagan's hospitalization forced Vice President George Bush to substitute for the chief executive. Bush did not disappoint his Black audience. Before three thousand people, the Vice President declared that his administration is "absolutely committed to supporting the nation's civil rights laws and to providing the resources necessary to make those laws work fairly and effectively for all Americans. We are committed to the principle of equal justice under the law." Interrupted repeatedly by loud applause, Bush promised to pressure public and private sources to grant greater financial support to traditionally Black universities. Bush was silent on whether the Reagan Administration would support the extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. But



college administrators and local Black elected officials were generally pleased. Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford stated that Bush's speech was "welcome by all of us who walked across the Edmund Pettus bridge" in nearby Selma, in the fight for Black equal rights and education.

During the spring and summer the Reagan Administration worked aggressively to draft less stringent terms for integration within state-funded higher education programs. By mid-August, agreements for Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Missouri, Louisiana, and West Virginia were completed which would leave the old segregation era Black and White institutions virtually intact. In general, the plans ease pressures on the formerly Whites-only systems to hire additional Black faculty and staff, and cutback any additional Black supervision within the governance of state universities. They also include provisions to improve both the academic program and physical facilities available at formerly all-Black colleges. The announcement of the newly relaxed desegregation policies had an immediate impact upon several court cases. Louisiana and Mississippi have consistently refused to alter their dual college systems, and were sued by the Federal Government for failing to enforce Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, barring racial discrimination by federally-supported institutions. The Louisiana case was postponed as state and federal officials were redrafting a settlement based on the North Carolina model.

The North Carolina agreement which was approved by Federal District Judge Franklin Dupree in Raleigh on July 10, after eleven years of litigation, quickly became the basic document for all other Southern states. The plan keeps the dual educational system intact, and has no provisions which would upgrade or expand master's or doctoral programs at Black universities. It ignores any quotas for the hiring of minority faculty and staff at North Carolina's white universities. The plan commits the state to allocate \$80 million "to upgrade the physical plants and academic programs" at the Black institutions, and provides some modest affirmative action guarantees to expand the number of Black graduate students in both systems. The plan also forbids the Federal Government from suing North Carolina officials over the agreement for five years.

The North Carolina plan was quickly denounced as a return to "separate but equal" by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., by former Carter Administration officials, and by Black alumni organizations from the traditional Black colleges in North Carolina. Leonard L. Haynes, director of the Of-

Black College Day

Students Converge On State Capitol

Nearly 5,000 students from the State's predominantly Black colleges observed Black College Day by marching from Raleigh Memorial auditorium to a rally at the State Capitol Building.

The September 28 march and rally were sponsored by the North Carolina Black Student Government Associations (NCBSGA) of which FSU serves as Vice President. FSU and its band led the procession.

A welcoming address was delivered to the students by Mr. Ben Ruffin, Special Assistant to the Governor for Minority Affairs. Presidents of NCBSGA also delivered addresses.

The North Carolina rally was part of a greater national effort by the Project '81 Coalition for Black Colleges. Marches and rallies were planned by coalitions in the states where the greatest peril to Black colleges exists: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

No Limits Other Than Self-Imposed

By Davetter Shepard

Your brain is a Xerox machine, a Polaroid one-step camera, a Betamax video-tape recorder, a wide-screen Technicolor projector, a thousand IBM computers, plus ten billion miniature microfilm cartridges, all delicately design in one storage battery, floating in an electrochemical solution.

With this virtually untapped and limitless resource, why aren't we more creative, inventive, and successful? Laziness, to be sure, is one mental block. Why bother? Fear is another big block. It is too risky for me, and it is not just fear of failure that holds us back. It is more often fear of success. Because we cannot see our potential, we are beaten from the start and so we make the excuse, it is not worth it to succeed. But what we are really saying is, I am not worth the effort. This negative self-esteem, plus a low self-image, resulting from negative attitudes, is the major energy gap preventing the release of full human actualization.

In order to feel good physically and to do good in the outer world, you need to get your head together through constructive thinking, not through superficial lip service, nor through one self-awareness cult after another, but by dedicated learning of new, healthy responses to the stimuli of life. In order to get rid of that mental crisis we are facing, we need to make that moment of truth that every winner experience at some time or another in life as the first and most important step in self-development; it is understanding how much potential and abundance we have and how little we have done to challenge our mine. It is realizing that each human being on earth is a person with equal rights to fulfill his or her own potential in life. It is understanding that skin color, birthplace, religious beliefs, sex, financial status,

and intelligence, are not measures of worth or worthiness. It is accepting the fact that every human being is a distinctly unique individual.

Make this moment the moment of truth about yourself. Admit that you have been selling yourself short all your life. Accept the fact that you have the opportunity to experience more environmental, physical, and mental/spiritual abundance than you could use in a thousand lifetimes. Open up your lenses to the possibilities and alternative available in your life.

You are the one who has put a limit on your life.

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Office for the Advancement of Public Negro Colleges, informed the *New York Times* that the Reagan Administration "let North Carolina do whatever it wanted to do, thus abdicating its responsibility to enforce Title VI." Defenders of the agreement include all five Black chancellors of the state universities, and probably a majority of Black college administrators and officials in the country. Clarence Thomas, a Black attorney from Georgia who was appointed by Reagan as the Department of

Knocks and \$\$\$ requirements for diplomas

Campus Digest News Service

It is the college degree for the uncolleged but painfully educated. The University of Hard Knocks, Inc., or UHK, issues diplomas annually to those applicants who haven't received a college degree, who are successful, and who attest to the belief that education means taking your lumps in the real world.

There are between 600 and 700 people out there who hold the degrees. Each has parted with \$100 for the honor. The founder of the University, James Comstock, officiated at the graduation ceremonies as he has for the past 30 years.

The mock university is not without famous supporters. Sen. Barry Goldwater holds a degree and Sen. Jesse Helms who recently received his degree.

The ceremonies take place on the campus of Alderson-Broadus College, a bonafide educational institution in Philippi, W. Va.

This education recognition program began as a joke when Comstock, a graduate of Marshall University in West Virginia was in the newspaper business with an uncolleged friend. His friend was so impressive, Comstock gave him a degree from the school of hard knocks. The idea grew and prospered.

Although UHK might have trouble getting accredited, it doesn't seem to bother anyone involved. After all, the graduates know they are graduates whether they have the piece of paper or not. Because what they have to show for their experience is reflected in UHK's school colors: black and blue.