

MENTAL SEGREGATION

by Tony Coleman

Recent activities involving the renovation of Fayetteville's Slave Market House have created a challenging emotional atmosphere for the local community. Ambiguity, confusion, and total resentment are just a few feelings possessed by local residents. These feelings lend support to the concept of mental segregation.

During the slave era, nearly one-half million Africans were brought to America by force where they were viewed as property, brought, sold, beaten, and lynched at the will of the white majority. Fayetteville's Slave Market House is a place where these dehumanizing acts took place. Slavery was rationalized on the grounds that Africans were considered not only "backward," but also "childlike" people who were incapable of exercising the rights guaranteed to white men under the Constitution.

After the Civil War, the official freedoms that had been granted to African-Americans did not reconcile the white elite's anger at the loss of cheap slave labor, or poorer whites' anger at the new source of competition from free blacks. To defend their dominant status, whites instituted new social boundaries and restrictions. They used legal mechanisms, like Jim Crow laws, that made it difficult for blacks to vote and banned them from public facilities. They also used social pressures to reward black leaders who called on others to cooperate with the dominant culture and to stop white liberals from encouraging blacks to demand more freedom and opportunity. Today the dominant white culture assumes the role of cultural gatekeepers, using their power to regulate the flow of new elements into society.

African-Americans who have ambiguous feelings about the Slave Market House are also those who are willing to share equal amounts of understanding and acceptance of its dual representation. Accepting the information provided on a plaque that hangs within the Slave Market House provides the foundation for those ambiguous feelings. The plaque, as accurately as possible,

provides information on the dates that several adoptions took place. There's also a plaque which honors those Africans who were enslaved during the 1800s. But this still doesn't justify wanting the structure, which was obviously designed for the auctioning of slaves, to exist in today's society. Blacks who share those ambiguous feelings feel that allowing the structure to exist enables black society to get the full impact of what transpired during the slave era and to be used as a reminder "not to let it happen again." I think they fail to realize that being victims of displacement and being forced to accept assimilation does not constitute "letting it happen." Just the same, it's been suggested that just as historical data on slavery is confined to archives and history books, so should the Market House and what it represents be confined, as an effort to extinguish mental segregation.

From the earliest days of this country, the white majority expected newcomers to adopt to their customs and values. This was achieved through the assimilation process - the incorporation of a minority group into the cultural and social life of the dominant group so that the minority eventually disappears as a separate, identifiable unit. Members of black society become confused when trying to understand why white society continues to expect them to revolve around what they consider to be the norm, customary, and valuable. Blacks are confused as to why the Market House is viewed as vital history to whites but can't be viewed as racially offensive to blacks. The same degree of confusion can be employed to explain why, in spite of the many contributions made by positive productive black members of society, blacks continue to remain the least accepted race in this country. Confusion, in some cases, can lead to rebellion or rejection and can be expressed in many ways as with Nat Turner - an escaped slave who formed a militant group consisting of about twenty slaves. Nat Turner and his group went from house to house expressing their confusion and rejection by killing 57 white Ameri-

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MUSIC NEWS from Uzi-D

by Jeff "Uzi-D" Anderson

Hi fellow Broncos. What's going on? Now that Homecoming is over and all the pomp and circumstance is finished, let's see what happened in the entertainment world.

First, the concert. Zhané, Fu Schnickens', and Queen Latifah did show up . . . but the crowd didn't. The show still went on starting with the Fu Schnickens'. They opened up the concert with the kind of performance that looked like a school talent show. It was hard to understand or to get into what they were saying, but anyway . . .

After Fu Schnickens, Zhané came with a "Groove Thing." These two young ladies performed very well from start to finish. I was even more impressed when they played the piano live while singing "Reasons." It gave me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. The harmony was tight, which supplemented for the fact that they did not have a spec-

tacular stage show.

After Zhané closed, Her Highness the Queen came on. At this time, the crowd increased by at least twelve more people. Latifah did some songs from her first album as well as from the new one, "Black Reign." It seems as if she didn't give her all because of the small number in the crowd, but she did throw down on "Weekend Love." Her live band was a great added attraction that brought a little more flavor to the music. Still, due to the classroom-sized crowd, the overall concert was pretty weak.

Not much else went on, except some other thing concerning myself (but I'll keep those on the down low).

Before I go, let me give you the run-down on what to look for and what's in the stores. Be on

the lookout for the new Mary J. Blige CD, "My Life," coming in December. Shaquille O'Neal's "Shaq-Fu Da Return" should be out now, as well as Keith Murray's latest (which is slammin'). Scarface came back hard with "The Diary."

Other CDs to checkout include those from Lords of the Underground, Digable Planets, Paris, DFC, Lil 1/2 Dead, and Black Sheep.

If you like R&B, check out the new CDs from Najee, Tony Terry, Whitehead Bros. (who brought you "Your love is a 187"), and Men at Large.

If I missed anything, I'll try to catch it next time. Meanwhile, this is Uzi saying always keep a song in your heart, God bless, and peace.

Dear Friend:

Corliss Hill and I are the new Contemporary Living Editors for ESSENCE Magazine. Our directive and personal mission for the section is to broaden the idea of Contemporary Living and to include--much more strongly--the voices, stories and ideas of Black women under 30. As Black women in our mid-twenties we know most mediums are not taking our generation very seriously. We are determined to make ESSENCE different, but we need your help.

We need to know what's going on with young people our age across the country: What issues are facing on campus? In your job? In relationships? With friends? What are you passionate about? Concerned about? Confused about? Help us help you. Contact us about any events, movements, stories or people we should cover. If you are

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