

Some days ago, a member of my family received a call from a young white woman who is curator of African art at New York's prestigious Metropolitan Museum. She wanted to know about Africa House which I helped to incorporate several years ago in New York State.

Upon my recent return from abroad, I called her. It seems she wants permission to use the Africa House name as a part of the Metropolitan. In my conversation with her, I reiterated several times that it was time Afro-Americans such as myself help direct this type of identification inherent in the name and purpose of our proposed Africa House. I concluded our conversation with a promise that I would talk to her in two months — after I return from another planned trip as an economist and journalist.

However, I know deep in my psyche is that somehow, we blacks must re-institute the thrust of the Africa House idea. So, I have called a black attorney and a couple of friends with money to catch up on the corporate taxes now due on Africa House. In my opinion, it would be better to control the concept and help steer Metropolitan rather than they monopolize sensitive relationships with our African peoples, leaders and heritage.

In my opinion, American philanthropy, despite the pleadings of many distinguished black Americans on all levels, has shied away from supporting gestures and symbols tying us to Africa.

Our original idea was to erect a prestigious building, dubbing it Africa House. The distinguished black American architect, Henri Legendre, actually designed a structure. It included a museum, exhibit halls, a library, meeting rooms, restaurants, a theater, office space, hotel rooms and apartments. It was to be backed by a responsible interracial board of governors and a board of trustees from both America and Africa. In this structure, a permanent program to promote cultural exchange, scholarships, education, forums, trade and commerce would be administered through Africa House. Rental of office space and profit revenues from the hotel and apartments would insure a budget for the Africa House program.

I still pray we may achieve this objective — a physical building which could be a pride and joy for Africans.

Africa House Idea Not New

The late Marcus Garvey saw in Africa economic salvation for black America and the Caribbean. This great visionary never got to go to Africa because he was betrayed by some whites, finally prosecuted in bigoted courts, banished to Jamaica where he died. Mr. Garvey envisioned headquarters in both the United States and West Africa. The depth of his dreams disturbed political and industrial America. For they saw in his African confluence a great awakening of blacks who had an opportunity engage in independent trade and commerce. Mr. Garvey's dedication and foresight is haunting and challenging.

Some old sages in Harlem have intrigued me with facts that at least three groups dating back to the late 30's, 40's and 50's actually put up store fronts designated "Africa House". Another organization actually acquire a brownstone building. One movement involving many members from past efforts actually incorporated an Africa House but was forced to let it go for a lack of funds.

Of late, the Harlem Development Corporation (HDC) has gone a step further. They have conceived an International Trade Center destined to be published in an area which already includes the New York

**United Nations
Needed: A Symbol To Africa in the U.S.**

By Curtis T. Perkins

State Office Building. HDC has engaged a distinguished correspondent, and traders and others doing business on the African continent to take significant space in the Center. Other Third World nations are also sought. HDC's structure was backed by the Carter Administration through the valiant leadership of Congressman Charles Rangel. In Washington, D.C., a very erudite group has also begun a national museum to gather in African and Afro-American antiquities, objects of art, artifacts and historic memorabilia.

Certainly all of these stabs at connecting America and Africa in a substantive sense are laudatory.

I must ask — do they go far enough to establish respect and due recognition of Africa in our great land.

**Other Ethnic and National
Far Ahead in Visibility and Clout**

Strangely enough, when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) needed a permanent building to avoid high rents, no one came to their rescue to donate such. New York City will probably lose this movement. The NAACP does employ scores of people, has a direct interest in black people everywhere. It is good for New York.

Yet, the national office of B'nai B'rith and its subsidiary, the Anti-Defamation League, were given the building near the United Nations which formerly housed the Carnegie Peace Foundation for many years. Further, the Jewish community has a score or more headquarters which they own individually which directly advance their image in culture, religion and for Israel.

There is an English Speaking Union, A French Society and museums for the Ukrainians, Irish, American Indians, etc.

For decades, India House has been a mainstay in the Wall Street area. Asia House is now a full-fledged tribute to this part of the world.

Japan House is a significant element in the United Nations community. There is also a Nippon Club in New York City. The Pan-American Union has long been in Washington.

Space will not permit me to note all of these active institutions who advance the causes of these various peoples throughout our nation and around the world.

Most of these establishments were made possible by the generosity of the American people. It must be fervently recognized, by us first of all, that blacks who earned no wages during slavery and low wages ever since, have substantially contributed therefore to individuals, institutions and corporations, making their philanthropy possible.

In some instances, indirect subsidy by U.S. Government agencies and the Department of State, in particular, have promoted the efficacy of these

organizations.

Yet support for most things Afri-Americans push to ally with Africa goes ignored or is starved out of existence.

The late Dr. John W. Davis, a resident of my town in New Jersey, recalled his experience in being on the board of directors of a white dominated institute purportedly mandated to help Africans. This former college president, administrator for the AID program in Africa under President Eisenhower and an executive with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund until his death, said two strange men always sat in on the meetings of this organization. They had little to say. But Dr. Davis found out these were operatives of the CIA and were using the movement to gather information at the UN and in Africa. In disgust, Dr. Davis quit the board.

Incidentally, this organization is still thriving, with a white man in charge.

When Richard Nixon was President, I sought funds for Africa House. One of his chief advisers, Leonard Garment, promised to work out the request. He never did, considering Watergate and other distractions. We got nowhere with President Gerald Ford either, although some highly placed blacks were advising him on African affairs.

African-Black American Relations Difficult

A few months ago, Carl Offord, the esteemed publisher and editor of *The Black American* lamented in an editorial, the lack of progress with Africans although he had tried for almost a score of years. Mr. Offord who carries more stories about Africa than any other newspaper, said he had few answers to this dilemma.

Many Africans at the UN and those laboring in winning support against the ugly racism as perpetrated by South Africa, say they are at a loss as to why more black Americans don't join them around the U.S. in their struggle.

Black entrepreneurs constantly complain that they are unable to effect meaningful and productive deals with African governments or African traders.

They point out they all too often have to deal with Asians and whites rather than indigenous Africans and getting very little consideration from these people.

Some black Americans blame the International Division of the U.S. Department of Commerce who favor white business men over blacks. The State Department is singled as having too few blacks in influential posts in Africa advocating fairness for black business people.

Black professionals, especially lawyers, cite very little work from African governments in the United States. Black Americans engaged in executive recruitment also gripe for not being allowed to supply black experts for Africa.

Africans say blacks with money do not invest in Africa, despite they have joint ventures thirsting for black capital with good return and guaranteed government protection.

The truth is very little mutual cooperation exists between Afro-Americans and Africans. Successful blacks in the oil business are known to have struck out making deals with African nations who have oil.

Some times expectations are too high. Most African governments are awfully poor. Many black Americans have good ideas but little cash to undergird their projects with Africa. Both looking to the other often end up blaming the other.

It would be that Africa House, with an efficient leader and staff, could help resolve these conflicts and guide black America and Africa to reciprocal achievement.

There Is Hope

Judge William Booth is president of the

Crime

(Continued from Page 14)

plaguering our society. However, we must not attempt to balance the Federal budget by destroying the crime fighting capability of our law enforcement agencies.

Reducing crime will take a concerted effort by professional crime fighters and the community. However, any lasting reduction in crime will necessitate revitalization of our community, improving our schools, strengthening small business, cleaning up our streets, and creating jobs. Let us work together to reduce this scourge of our neighborhoods.

Mozambique

(Continued from Page 13)

concentrated.

Mozambique officials stress that the country is seeking assistance from both East and West and point to the Portuguese gift as evidence that repeated approaches to the West are bearing fruit. Last month, Mozambique signed a military cooperation agreement with NATO member Portugal and a \$170 million railway rehabilitation aid accord with France, Portugal and Canada.

At about the same time, a senior Mozambican delegation visited Moscow and a high-level Soviet Military team was in Mozambique.

No details are available, but it is believed that agreement has been reached for the Soviets to supply more sophisticated weapons than in the past.

Mozambique plans to gain Western aid and investment.

Machel who visited Italy last year, is planning a trip to France, Holland, and possibly Britain. Minister of Information Jose Luis Cabaco has just completed a tour of the United States.

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ST. THERESA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN PUBLIC HEARING

WHEN: Monday, June 21, 1982
WHERE: City Council Chamber, City Hall, 101 City Hall Plaza
TIME: 7:30 P.M.

The Durham City Council will hold a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed amendments to the Redevelopment Plan for the St. Theresa Neighborhood Strategy Area. The project is bounded by Baxter Street on the north, east to Fargo Street, Fargo Street northwest to Hillside Avenue, South Street south to Chestnut Street and east to Roxboro Road; Roxboro Road on the east, south to Piedmont Avenue, Piedmont Avenue east to Fayetteville Street south to the W. D. Hill Recreation Center; the Recreation Center west to Hillside Park, Sawyer Street north to Umstead Street; Umstead Street west to the railroad tracks and the railroad tracks north to Baxter Street. A map indicating this boundary is available.

The proposed amendments will be presented at the public hearing by city staff, and citizens will have the opportunity to comment on the amendments.

Interested citizens are urged to attend this public hearing.

Copies of the proposed amendments to the Redevelopment Plan are available for public inspection in the Planning and Community Development Department, 2nd floor, City Hall. Also, the Planning and Community Development staff are available to explain the proposal to anyone who may be interested.

For more information, call the Planning and Community Development Department at 683-4137.

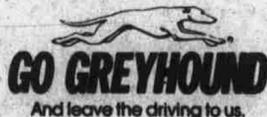
The Carolina Times: June 11 and 18, 1982

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