

## The Charlotte Post

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# Exploiting America's working poor

## Corporations get rich through the spiteful treatment of labor

By Carol Driscoll  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

When I learned that the courageous workers at the Tyson Chicken plant in Cleveland, Miss., voted to be represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Workers Union — despite a ferocious anti-union campaign — I felt this was a great ethical victory. The conditions at the Cleveland plant are revolting: workers get only one seven minute bathroom break a day; injured and bleeding workers are forced to return to the processing line, and earned sick pay is denied to people.

I'm a union member and I'm proud that some years ago, after learning about the brutality Tyson workers are subjected to, I stopped buying their chickens. As an Aesthetic Realism consultant, I passionately want the people of Charlotte, including workers at Tyson's plant in Monroe, to know what I am so grateful to have learned about the economy from Aesthetic Realism, the education founded in 1941 by the great American educator and economist, Eli Siegel, and taught today at the Aesthetic Realism Foundation, a not-for-profit educational foundation in New York City.

In 1970, Mr. Siegel explained this tremendous fact: that a way of economics that had gone on for centuries — the profit system — had failed because its basis is contempt for people. Contempt, "the lessening of what is different from oneself as a means or self-increase as one sees it," is, I learned, as ordinary as not listening to a person, or making fun of the way someone dresses. It is also the cause of all economic injustice, including working conditions that are dehumanizing and dangerous; that exist to make profit or Tyson stockholders who do not work for their dividend checks and never give a thought to the persons who are doing the work.

The brutal exploitation of workers in America today, including the attempt to destroy unions, is happening because companies can no longer make the profit they once did. Mr. Siegel stated: "There will be no economic recovery in the world until economics itself, the making of money, the having of jobs, becomes ethical; is based on good will rather than on the ill will that has been predominant for centuries." And in the international journal, "The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known," Ellen Reiss, the Class Chairman of Aesthetic Realism, explained compassionately:

"Never before in American history was there such ill nature and just plain anger in the workplaces of this land. The ill nature and anger are about ethics. A person at a computer in Salt Lake City; a man cutting metal in a Pennsylvania factory; a woman packaging chicken parts in a South Carolina plant, working on an assembly line, at a freezing temperature, with dangerous equipment, for little pay, with her body aching — these people are desperate for the paycheck they get, but also feel humiliated, outraged, profoundly kicked around...The American people are furious—more overtly, flailingly, permeatingly furious than ever before—at being treated unethically. They want, with American blood beating in their veins, an ethical economy!"

The ethical economy the American people want and have a complete right to; where people are seen with respect, are paid well, and treated with dignity, will occur when persons throughout our nation—including government officials, economists and labor leaders, are asking and honestly answering the emergent and kind question Mr. Siegel asked: "What does a person deserve by being a person?"

CAROL DRISCOLL is a consultant at the Aesthetic Realism Foundation in New York City.

# Genocide and African Americans' right for redress

By Conrad Worrill  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Since our Oct. 25 announcement of a campaign charging the United States government with genocide, the National Black United Front has circulated petitions throughout the country and thousands of people are beginning to sign them.

It is our goal to obtain 1 million signatures in our petition drive declaring that for over 400 years, the United States government has committed innumerable acts of genocide against black people.

These petitions will be formally submitted to the United Nations on May 6, as part of the annual African Liberation Day activities celebrated throughout the African world community. NBUF chapters are beginning to hold forums on the issue of

genocide in various cities around the country. On Dec. 6, over 200 people attended a forum, sponsored by the NBUF, Chicago Chapter, and the CIA, Crack Cocaine and genocide. The following day, I flew to New York City and participated in a similar forum sponsored by the Metropolitan New York Chapter of NBUF. It was a very good forum and the word of our campaign is spreading in New York and on the Eastern Seaboard.

Before I left New York, Jitu Weusi, one of the major architects of NBUF and a longtime activist and organizer, and I attended church service at the renowned House of The Lord Church in Brooklyn where the Rev. Herbert Daughtry is the pastor. Rev. Daughtry was the founding Chairman of NBUF and served in that capacity from

# Pertinent facts about Ebonics

By Joe Madison  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER  
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Give a gold star to whoever first sounded the warning that you should never believe everything you hear or read. That saying has been put to the test with the media's coverage of the Oakland, Calif., school board's resolution seeking recognition of Ebonics as an effective tool to teach black youngsters standard English.

But if you let the media tell it, the Oakland school officials voted to proclaim "Black English" as an official, separate language and would seek government funds to help instructors teach this foreign tongue to our children. Wrong. In fact, the media left such a thick, confused cloud over this story that many of us easily drew the wrong conclusions.

What the school board actually said was that by recognizing Ebonics — a word derived by the combination of Ebony (black) and phonics (sound) — as a legitimate teaching technique, more Black students could learn to speak and write standard English at levels greater than they are now.

And they have the proof to support their contentions. A few years ago, the same Oakland school district carried out a trial program with about 100 teachers who used language exercises to smooth over the transition from "Black English" to standard English. School officials there said the program worked so well that it boosted language test scores.

So, instead of lobbing insults at the Oakland school board

when this story broke, I invited Professor Robert Williams of Washington University in St. Louis to come on my radio show to field questions on this issue. Professor Williams, who first coined the term "Ebonics" close to 30 years ago, was one of my teachers at Washington University. He was an early advocate of using Ebonics as a method to help our children better understand the differences in how they may normally speak among family and friends, as opposed to how they should speak in a more public setting. He said that the mere use of "Black English" has always been seen by the rest of society as a knock against the black community. He also said that the self-esteem of black children has suffered from years of being put down by teachers who scold our kids, sometimes in a most humiliating fashion.

"Ebonics is a bridge from the language that is familiar and already spoken by the child to one that is unfamiliar," Professor Williams said. You can even draw a parallel from this controversy that would remind us of our whole experience as African descendants. When our ancestors were snatched from Africa into slavery, they were forced to forget their familiar language and learn English, Spanish, French, or whatever tongue the slave owners spoke. Then, we had the Boer invasion of South Africa and part of their domination strategy was to cram the Afrikaans language down the throats of the black South African school children, until they could take no more.

Tha's what the grisly Soweto Massacre was about.

But what is amazing to me in this controversy is the rapid response of Richard W. Riley, the secretary of Education. Look how fast he came out to say that "elevating Black English" to the status of a language is not the way to raise standards of achievement. He even shot down the notion of the Ebonics program receiving federal dollars even before the Education Department received an official request, which incidentally it didn't get anyway, because it was never the intention of the Oakland resolution to do so. And Kweisi Mfume of the NAACP, Jesse Jackson and others quickly denounced the Oakland vote, without even reading the resolution.

But we haven't heard from Riley about what he's going to do about the outdated textbooks being used in black school districts, or the appalling lack of computers in the classrooms. Mfume and Jackson have been awfully silent while there is a scary increase in the number of violent attacks in public schools, especially in Washington, D.C. Aren't these bigger threats to the welfare of our children? Ebonics is no different from the dialects used by southern whites, or whites in the North for that matter.

Lately we've seen explained in the media that one characteristic of Ebonics in the dropping of the "ing" on words. But how many whites who speak with a Southern accent drop their "ings" too? It all boils down to patterns of speech that are commonly spoken by groups of people. And wherever you turn,

you'll find someone straying from the rules of strict, standard English.

I am a true believer that black youth are more than capable of mastering the "King's English." As it turns out, the Oakland school board deserves the biggest gold star for its bold step forward teaching black students with an even hand of sensitivity and respect.

In case you missed it, the Dallas Morning News, a few weeks ago, confirmed the charges made by Celerino Castillo, a former Drug Enforcement Administration agent, that our government had knowledge that cocaine was being flown into the U. S. during the mid-'80s, but did nothing about it. A team of Morning News reporters went to El Salvador, where Castillo was stationed at that time, and interviewed several informants who reported their findings to Castillo.

Castillo sent that information — which tied the cocaine shipments to Oliver North and the effort to finance the Nicaraguan Contra rebels, who were organized by the CIA — to DEA headquarters in Washington. Today, his records remain classified and the DEA refuses to release the information. Jan. 1, 1997, was the 76th day of my hunger strike to get Congress to pass a Records Act that would force the DEA, CIA and the rest of the government to come clean. Stay tuned.

JOE MADISON is a radio talk show host in Washington, D. C. Visit his Internet site at: <http://www.paltech.com/madison>

