

Forum

Racism: When will we change?

At the beginning of this year, we issued a warning about the continued escalation in violent and institutionalized forms of racism in nearly every section of the United States. American racism is a hideous assault on

The racial tension in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, New York in the wake of the tragic death of 7-year-old Guyanese American Gavin Cato, who was hit by a car driven by a Hasidic Jew and the subsequent

only think "That is how things are in New York City." When Rodney King was beaten brutally, there were some who considered that case as being symptomatic only of the city of Los Angeles. Yet, the reality is that the problem of racial injustice is conditioned by all institutions throughout this society, both urban and rural.

The point here is that this nation cannot afford to keep its attention focused primarily on unfolding situations in the Soviet Union and other parts of the world while rendering insufficient attention to the growing internal problems here in the United States. Yes, we welcome the changes for greater democracy and justice in the Soviet Union. Hopefully, the billions of dollars that were unwisely being spent by the United States on military weapons can now be transferred to "heal" some of the domestic ills.

The questions are when will America change? When will there be a substantive national effort by all levels of this society to eradicate racism and racial injustice? How many more persons will be victimized before racism in the United States is really challenged?

There are many in the African-American community who rightfully say "our cup has runneth over and we demand a change now."

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS JR.

human dignity, yet in America there continues to be a reluctance toward a national resolve to challenge the increase in domestic racial injustice.

The racial turmoil that once again is engulfing the nation's largest should not be viewed in isolation. The problems of the multiple standards of justice based on race, the murders and violent deaths of African-Americans and others as a result of racially motivated violence, and the increasing socioeconomic racial disparities are all part of one of the most critical problems facing this society. It is American apartheid. It is American racism.

While the public at large has its undivided attention on the situation in the Soviet Union, inside the United States the social and racial situation is getting worse.

violence between the African-American community and the Hasidic Jewish community is not an isolated case. New York City has witnessed numerous incidents of racial bigotry and violence during the last decade and more.

New York's Mayor, David Dinkins, is appealing earnestly for "healing" and "peace." But until there is racial justice and equal justice for all in New York and throughout America, there will be no peace and there will be no healing. On the night before the funeral for Gavin Cato, another African-American teenager, Anthony Amos, was killed in Brooklyn by New York police officers under questionable circumstances.

When people who live outside New York hear about the racial problems in the city, some mistak-

History book critic makes sense

In this space before, we praised the state of New York for its wise decision to rewrite the history books to include more about the contributions of minorities.

Nathan Glazier, a Harvard University professor who helped

more could identify Harriet Tubman, a black woman, than Winston Churchill or Joseph Stalin. More know Tubman than know that Abraham Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation.

Further, a survey of New York

the accomplishments of their ancestors are not enough.

Contributions of minorities are still treated like something extraneous to American history, and the more special workshops teachers attend, the more special efforts they make to make their lessons ethnically diverse, the more patronizing they become. Indeed, it is little more than ethnic celebration.

And as one of today's student rappers might say, "We don't want patronizing, we want recognizing."

The only way to treat the contributions of minorities is to stop singling them out; stop making them seem like something special; stop having days and months for special celebrations.

Treat minorities and their contributions as we treat other Americans and Europeans in our history books.

That way, blacks and other minorities will see themselves as part of a homogeneous group, all of whom played key roles and made equally significant contributions to this nation's growth and development.

Once that happens, there will be no need for racial or ethnic cheerleading . . . and the more one thinks about it, the more sense Glazier makes.

AGAINST THE GRAIN

By ROOSEVELT WILSON

urge New York to make that decision, said recently that he believes there already is a distorted view of history and it is slanted in favor of minorities.

Glazier was a member of the committee that reviewed the state's curriculum, and he endorsed the committee's report that said the state's history books should emphasize minorities more. Is he speaking with forked tongue, or is Glazier speaking out of both sides of his mouth?

Perhaps neither. After reading Glazier's rationale, I concede that his argument makes some sense. According to the Associated Press, Glazier says, for example, that a national sample of 17-year-olds shows that

state teachers showed that more had attended workshops of African history and black studies during the 1990-91 school year than on American and European history. Glazier says additionally that if it were not for blacks, there would not be this great push for multicultural education.

However, Glazier continues to support New York in its multicultural efforts, but he said the schools will have to work hard to keep nonsense and "mindless ethnic and racial celebration" out of the classroom.

What Glazier is not saying, but what is obvious, is that the African history and black studies workshops, and the black students' growing knowledge about

social and economic status despite a background of poverty. He rose to his current position on the federal appeals court after serving as chair of the Equal

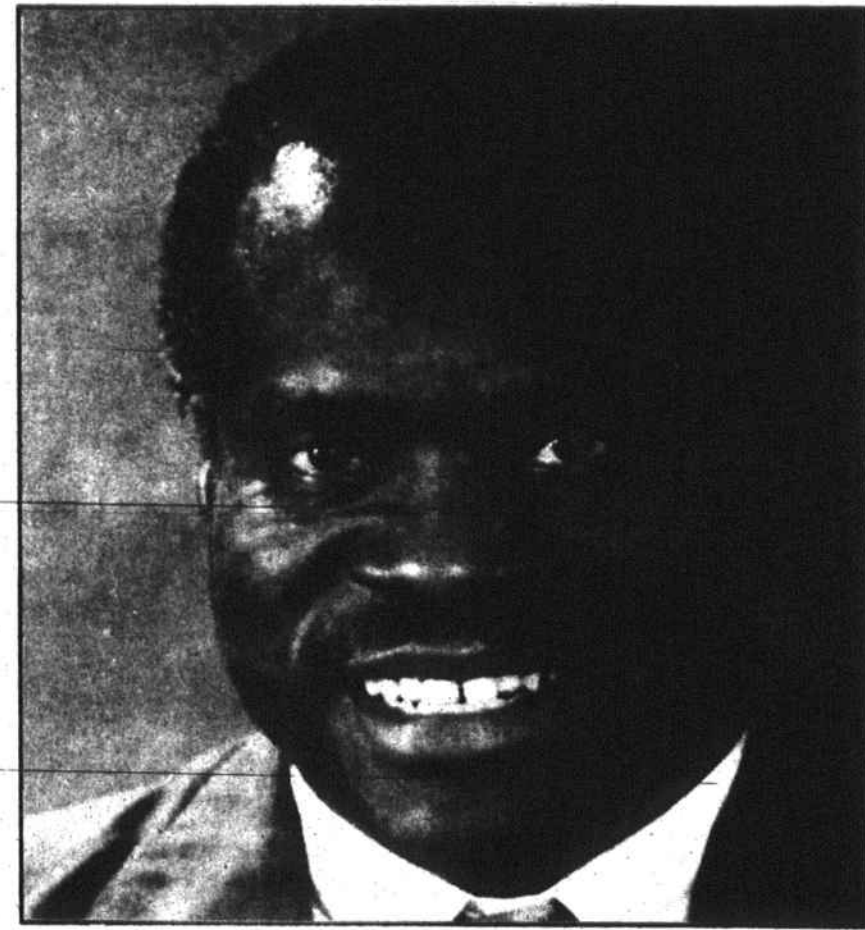
Jones, deputy director of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, part of the coalition of civil rights, religious, legal and women's organizations opposed to the nomination.

"If we were to support Thomas simply because he is black, we would be giving him the benefit of the doubt, but he has a demonstrated record opposing important civil rights principles."

The Bush Administration is expected to launch a major offensive utilizing black Republicans to build "unity" around the Thomas nomination. Other Republican supporters like Jesse Helms, renowned for launching one of the most racist re-election campaigns in recent history, has taken a relatively low-keyed role. Former klanman and Louisiana state representative David Duke has publicly given Thomas his endorsement.

The opening of the Senate confirmation hearings will coincide with the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Weekend here.

The CBC was one of the first African-American organizations to reject Thomas for failing to meet the standards of a nominee to carry on the Marshall legacy



The Thomas Nomination

Pro

Clarence Thomas' \$42.5 million gift to blacks

Although what they really don't like about him is the fact that he escaped the white liberal, but black liberal-supervised plantation and became a Republican, and a conservative

The facts of history, however, are stubborn things.

In 1973, General Motors and the United Auto Workers were charged with discrimination against blacks, Hispanics,

GM agreed to pay \$42.5 million. Thomas directed more than \$10 million in endowments and scholarships to increase educational opportunities for non-whites and women, with a preference given to non-white GM employees, their spouses and children.

The Oklahoma Eagle, a black Tulsa weekly, reported that black colleges were disproportionately chosen to receive endowments.

Thomas divided more than \$10 million among various organizations, which included 18 black universities: Alabama State, Atlanta, Central State, Fisk, Florida A&M, Grambling, Hampton, Howard, Jackson State, Langston, Morgan State, Prairie View, Savannah State, Southern, Tennessee State, Tuskegee, Wilberforce and Xavier.

That says a lot about what Clarence Thomas thinks of black colleges — and the education of black people.

Langston University president Dr. Ernest L. Holloway said he supports Thomas' nomination because of his longstanding

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TONY BROWN

Syndicated Columnist

one at that, Clarence Thomas' black Democratic critics pretend that his record as chairman of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is really the basis to deny him a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court.

One black ignoramus so-called columnist from Washington, D.C. even called it a "sin" to be black and a Republican.

Therefore, you must be careful after reading this column that you do not divulge the facts to others — or you may expose the huge lie that says Clarence Thomas is ashamed of black people and does not want to help them — and didn't help them when he had a chance.

Native-Americans, and women. The issues raised included failure to hire and bias in promotions.

For the next 10 years, various EEOC chairpersons, including one black female Democrat who says she would prefer a white liberal to a black conservative on the High Court, failed to settle the case during a Democratic administration.

But on October 18, 1983, Thomas signed an unprecedented pact on behalf of non-whites and women — the largest non-litigated settlement in the history of the EEOC — and resolved hundreds of employment discrimination claims against GM and the UAW.

Con

Why the Thomas nomination must be opposed

There is a storm of debate occurring throughout the African-American community over the recent nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas by George Bush for the highest court in the land, the U.S. Supreme Court. Many African-Americans who mean well and others who are clearly opportunistic are pushing for his confirmation because he was poor and black and in the best tradition of "Americanism," through "self-help," he advanced to become a lawyer, an administrator over the Equal Opportunity Commission and an Appeals Court Judge. Others are suggesting he ought to be confirmed because he may be our only hope of getting another African-American to succeed the legendary human and civil rights champion, Justice Thurgood Marshall. Then there are those who want to give him a chance even though they know he is a neo-conservative and opposes the traditional ways African-Americans have struggled against inequality and injustice, but they believe he can be saved. Most of these views sound hopeful but are at best speculation and wishful

thinking. Our future is too important to us and the world for it to be left to chance, pity and an empty dream. I believe that Thomas is not to be pitied, admired or accepted because he is black. He is to be accepted or opposed because of his record and what he represents.

get himself elected. But that was three years ago. Now, for the Republicans to appear to be "multicultural," they need a "new black" face who advocates the party line and sings the company song. Now it is Clarence Thomas, who is part of the new rising African-American neo-

Judge Thomas' opponents gearing up

Washington — What do North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms and former klanman David Duke have in common?

They are both part of a long

list of foes of civil rights who are on record supporting the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court.

But white right-wing supporters have assumed a back seat as the controversy over the conservative nominee simmers to the boiling point in the African-American community.

The battle lines are being drawn as both sides gear up for the Senate nomination hearings scheduled to begin September 10.

"Give the brother a chance," insists Thomas backers.

"Actions speak louder than color," is the unequivocal refrain.

Thomas supporters cite an admirable story of the native of Pinpoint, Georgia who achieved

Employment Opportunity Commission during both of President Reagan's terms.

But Thomas' opponents call attention to a career that appears devoted to the Reagan-Bush conservative agenda which many say has overturned three decades of civil rights progress.

Ironically, opponents maintain, Thomas' record on affirmative action and civil rights represents the antithesis of the legacy laid by retiring Justice Thurgood Marshall, the lone African-American on the Supreme Court and an ardent champion of equal rights.

"As much as we would like to see an African-American succeed Justice Marshall, the issue is deeper than color," insists Elaine

GUEST COLUMN

By JOHN MENDEZ



While I appreciate diversity, I have no commendation for conscious betrayal.

The nomination of Clarence Thomas must be put into context. The Republican Party and the White House have already demonstrated how skillful they are when it comes to turning politics into a puppet theater. It seems like the Presidential election requires the presence of an African-American face, for better or for worse. In 1988, it was Willie Horton, the villain convict, who while on leave, committed another crime which Bush, in the Jesse Helms way, used to

conservative movement that is disavowing civil rights, rewriting African-American history and redefining and watering down the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. by portraying him as someone who was a colorblind idealist, for whom the issue of racism was not important. Persons such as Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele, Tony Brown, and others, like the reactionary Inkatha movement in South Africa, are being rewarded for blocking the efforts of not only their own African-

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