

Reparations or Else ... America's Fall

By RON DANIELS

A few weeks ago a self-righteous President Clinton journeyed to Memphis to lecture go black pastors and lay people about the crisis of crime and violence in America.

Speaking at the church where Martin Luther King delivered his last speech before he was assassinated, President Clinton, in an almost scolding tone, talked about what he felt Dr. King would think about the violence that is ripping apart the black community.

Clinton admonished black people to take responsibility for condemning and stopping the violence in the inner cities where "black-on-black crime" is so prevalent. It was amazing that African-American leaders would even listen to such a patronizing, condescending and racist series of insults from a President of the United State. Martin Luther King must have cringed.

If the President had done his homework well, he would have heard the words of Martin Luther King proclaiming: "I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government."

In that regard, the real question facing Bill Clinton, the U.S. government and American society is who will take responsibility for the long history of violence against African people in this nation? Who will take responsibility for the damages done to the daughters and sons of Africa as captives during slavery? Who will take responsibility for taking away our names, for the cultural aggression, the long season of legalized lynching, the institutional racism and ruthless exploitation which plagues the African community to this very moment in our his-

tory?

America is reaping the bitter harvest of its own past and present policies, customs and practices of injustice. Like the old folks used to say in the black community: "God don't like ugly."

America does not deserve to have peace until this nation has atoned for all the crimes and atrocities committed in the struggle to establish and maintain a new European white nation in this hemisphere: the conquest and capture of this land from the indigenous people and the genocide committed against them; the seizure of land from Mexico; the exploitation of the Chinese and other Asian peoples; and the African holocaust: the capture and enslavement of untold millions of Africans to toil in the Americas to create unimaginable wealth for a growing system of capitalism in Europe and America based on our free labor.

The current crisis we face as Africans in America is directly related to the African holocaust and the genocide committed against African people in this country for centuries. America must take responsibility for its callousness and neglect, its sins and criminal behavior toward African Americans. America must atone, repent and repair/heal the damages done to African people under a racist, capitalist system of oppression. There is nothing wrong with the African community in the U.S. that reparations would not cure!

In a recent article I called for a massive boycott of "White Christmas" if reparations were not on the "American Agenda" by 1999. It is my conviction that we must emphatically reject the idea of blaming ourselves for our condition as an oppressed people (as is currently in vogue with many leaders in the black community). An oppressive U.S. government and society must be our target. As we pour libations

during Kwanzaa and at other cultural-political ceremonies and celebrations, our ancestors must be overcome by anger by our apathy and inaction on the most important item on the agenda to restore the race — reparations. They must be asking, did we struggle, suffer, bleed and die in vain? What this generation of African freedom fighters must take responsibility for is leading African people out of the hell created by American society.

Our battle cry must be reparations or else ... Those of us who are serious about the restoration of the race must redouble our effort to educate, mobilize and organize the masses of African people to compel the U.S. government to pay a meaningful portion of the trillions of dollars legitimately owed to African people for the centuries of free labor that built this nation. And, America must pay for the physical, cultural and spiritual damages done to our people during the long and tragic travail of slavery. Our ancestors demand that we cease and desist from the fratricide, from self-destruction and self-condemnation to make America pay for the African holocaust.

Our battle cry must be reparations or else ... boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience, disruption, "any means necessary" to achieve justice for Africans in America.

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again." It is our sacred duty to rise up in memory of our ancestors and as a sacred obligation to those who suffer now; to rise up to vindicate the life and legacy of all of those who struggled before us, so that we might have a new African future and a genuine new world order. There must be no peace, no reconciliation until America is forced to meet our righteous demand for justice. Our battle cry must be reparations or else ... America must fall.

SHARE THE DREAM



"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

We at Coca-Cola Bottling Company Consolidated are committed to Martin Luther King's ideals. To bring "The Dream" closer to reality, we have instituted strong equal employment programs, developed student scholarships, and increased our community involvement.



Touring Our Roots

What do you and yours do as a ritual for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday?

On the Fourth of July African Americans usually join in picnics and outings to celebrate our country's independence. On Thanksgiving and Christmas, we have turkey and trees and give gifts to do honor to these holidays. Each of our holidays has a ritual of remembering its heritage, and as the new King holiday evolves, year by year, many more blacks will make ritual and rites around who, what and why we are as we are in America today. One thing black families can consider is to take it upon themselves to take an African-American Heritage Tour.

to true equality is Oberlin's Westwood Cemetery. Here in their final resting place are blacks and whites together side-by-side, as they were in their struggles.

Martin Luther King Jr., too, made Oberlin and Lorain County one of his stops. He spoke here in the 1960s about "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution." He also noted that this town was indeed awake on the issue of social unity and liberation for all.

Blacks families of today will also find a reflective and meditative setting here as they explore the histories of those who affected vital changes in civil rights history. Sites include the Martin Luther King Jr.

GUEST COLUMNIST

By WILLIAM REED

One place to start touring our roots is in Lorain County, Ohio. In Lorain County and Oberlin, Ohio's rich African-American heritage spans two centuries of an organized black and white united fight for liberty. Few communities can claim a stronger heritage for black freedom as that of Oberlin. Centered around a well-known college of spirituality and education, Oberlin's citizens and students became actively involved in the anti-slavery movement in the early 1800s. Widely known as a "hotbed of abolitionists" after its founding in 1833, visitors touring Oberlin today will find that the town's residents provided a major stopping point on the "underground railroad," at a time when it really wasn't popular in America to do this. If you follow Frederick Douglass' advice of the 1800s to "follow the North Star to freedom," you will find yourself in a county that borders Canada, which during the antebellum period, was the "Promised Land" for escaping slaves. In the Oberlin of the 1800s, blacks were able to live their lives in peace within the safe confines of this town. A sight to see here, in regards

Park: homes that were Underground Railroad locations; the Oberlin College Archives; and numerous modern African-American-owned businesses.

In addition to its anti-slavery fame, Lorain County's African-American history, culture, shopping and multicultural events provide an interesting backdrop for an entertaining visit. People coming here to see the "faces and places" that produced significant change for the country can stay at the Oberlin Inn. Actually the only inn in town, the Oberlin Inn has \$99 weekend rate that should make he lodging part of a visit very accommodating.

What African Americans do as rituals to celebrate their own history is evolving. But education and awareness of our history and growth in this country can be valuable and long-lasting for adults and especially for our youth. Lorain County has preserved meaningful parts of African-American history and put them on display. Oberlin's past and pride in what it did at a pivotal time in American history can insure visitors a sense of pride for tomorrow.

Make Everyday A Day For MLK.*



The legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. is more than a dream. It's the power of love and kindness that he set in motion. Today, the need for MLK* (*More Love and Kindness) is greater than ever before. And sharing our lives, our love and our kindness with others will help to keep the great work of Martin Luther King, Jr. alive.

RJ Reynolds
Tobacco Company