

Black minds in need of a serious locksmith

By Robert Muhammad
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught that there were 17,000,000 rusty locks in America, in 1934. The term "locks" was used to represent the minds of Black people. These were minds that had become rusty from lack of use since the advent of chattel slavery in the West. By today's census, that number would increase to over 40,000,000.

The smith who works on these locks that are rusty and therefore, inoperative must be a true craftsman of his guild. He must be a master. He must recondition the lock in order that it may function properly. It must be oiled and primed for use. There must also be the provision of a master key that will catch and turn the tumblers. If he is able to succeed in an undertaking of this magnitude, individuals that were affected

with the rusty mind are most grateful.

To place the above illustration in a modern context, consider the young student who suffers from math anxiety. He is unable to unlock the secrets of success until a "special" teaching (key) is provided from a unique individual. After years of struggling, a particular instructor is able to assist the student in breaking free from the dense fog to embrace mathematics. Of course, the student is grateful and there is little doubt that this event will certainly have a deep, lasting effect on him.

The student cannot imagine a way in which to pay back this extraordinary person who helped him unlock his mind. He may feel the inclination only to receive and give future instruction in mathematics in the manner that the beloved teacher taught. He may personally redefine and practice the science of mathematics under the name of

his instructor. Even worse, he may begin to propagate this "new" science to others.



Muhammad

This may seem far fetched. However, I submit that the above scenario has occurred throughout time, most commonly in religion. Each time a figure of great proportion was commissioned by Allah (God) to go unto a specific people, he taught great things and exemplified a great way of living. Invariably in each case he assisted the failing student in becoming masters of their fates. He has in fact, unlocked the rusty locks with a superior wisdom from the Supreme Being.

Unfortunately, in most cases after this figure's departure the

people he taught were given to hero worship and conjuring myths. Those that were taught by great illuminaries such as: Buddha, Tsao, Zoraster, Jesus and Muhammad, often called the expression of Allah's (God's) concern for them by the names of the teachers. Consequently, we now have: Buddhism, Tsaoism, Zorasterism and Christianity. The adherents to Islam were said to follow Muhammadism and were referred to as Muhammadans.

Naming the expression of Allah (God's) word after the messenger is a direct affront to the Creator of the worlds. None of the great men of God are self made from the material that we find in sperm and egg. None gain the knowledge of God and His great mission for them through osmosis. Yet, the students of the doctrines continue to give one that is sent more credit than the sender.

We must remember that all

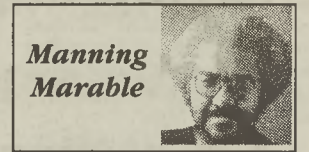
the wisdom that was possessed of the craftsmen, (messengers, son, prophets) belongs to and comes from the Creator. He is the source of all power. He may express the power in whatever manner He chooses. The power then may be conferred on whoever, the creator has chosen.

In Islam it is common to hear a believer say, "All praises are due to Allah." This gives due credit to the source from which everything originates. It also serves as a reminder to the speaker and those that are effected by He to whom the believer gives praise, that there is only one God. The Holy Qur'an reminds us in sura 112, entitled "The Unity", of the following truth, "He, Allah, is One. Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten and none is like Him."

As-Sallam Aliakum.

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Redefining color line



Manning Marable

A century ago, W.E.B. Du Bois predicted that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line." At the time, Du Bois's prediction focused on the domination of Europe and the United States over the non-Western peoples throughout the globe. Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean were dominated by colonialism and imperialism. The struggle against the color line was a fight for political independence and self-determination.

As we face the dawn of a new century a new color line defines the realities of the Third World. With the processes of globalization and corporate expansionism the economic dynamics of exploitation have been even more intense than a century ago. The information revolution in computer technology has transformed the very character of production, eliminating millions of jobs.

As devastating as these processes have been for black people throughout the African diaspora and inside the ghettos of the United States, it has also been very destructive to millions of Europeans and white Americans. Increasingly, white middle America is suffering from economic stagnation and the loss of jobs which can actually support families. There are growing social problems in white communities which Daniel Patrick Moynihan had previously identified as the "social pathology" of the urban ghetto. Now one witnesses in millions of white households growing rates of unemployment, out-of-wedlock childbirth, and drug dependency. Even in the Republican Party, growing numbers of white working class people have expressed their social alienation from the policies of those in power. However, the U.S. political system is not designed to permit working class opposition to express itself through third parties.

We are entering a new political period where the old realities of race and class in the U.S. and globally are being transformed before our very eyes. The majority of non-white people in the U.S. by the year 2010 will no longer be African Americans. The old binary system of race which defined black and white alike is rapidly coming to an end. This process of cultural and ethnic reconfiguration is also occurring in many other countries as well.

The government has recognized the dangers of these changes in racial and ethnic identities and has attempted to steer the discussion toward safe boundaries. The concept "Hispanic" was established by the Federal government as an official ethnic category less than 30 years ago. The Bureau of the Census is contemplating the creation of a "multicultural" category in effect to subdivide communities of African descent. The debates about racial and ethnic terms illustrate that "race" still has terrible and destructive power within American society. But accurately defined, the reality of race expresses itself most clearly and fundamentally as the pervasive reality of inequality — the unequal distribution of resources, food, shelter, education, employment and power.

During the civil rights movement, African American activists contemplated the politics of social change as an effort to gain access to the socio-economic mainstream of American society. In the period of the new color line facing the 21st century the objectives of our struggle must be changed. The main struggle is to redefine the political project we call "America." MANNING MARABLE is a professor and author.

Late recognition for World War II hero

By George Wilson

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Whenever America has gone to war, African Americans have always answered the call. Over the years, people of color readily given their lives to defend freedoms that weren't always guaranteed to them. And those who didn't pay the ultimate price, often suffered life-changing injuries. In times of combat, some soldiers exhibit bravery above and beyond the call of duty. Robert Jones of Newport News, VA, is one such warrior.

In 1944, Jones was serving in the U.S. Navy as a steward on the USS Intrepid. Because of the Armed Services' misguided practices at that time, the only jobs he and other African Americans could perform were cooking and cleaning. Fortunately for the Navy and the nation, Jones also received training on how to use the ship's guns. In his first taste of combat, that knowledge came in handy. Jones used his newly-acquired skills to shoot down a Japanese suicide bomber that was heading directly for him. Instead of fleeing, Jones held his

ground. Ten of his colleagues would lose their lives during the attack. Jones, meanwhile sustained severe burns for his bravery.

For Jones, his heroism was a direct result of the Navy's unofficial policy. "At one time, they thought we couldn't do anything but serve officers, wash dishes, make beds and cook. When it comes down to war, the Navy wants you to do everything. They don't lock you in the kitchen and tell you stay down there. You had to come topside and fight," he said.

While hospitalized, Jones was told that he would receive an award for his heroism. But 50 years after that promise he was still waiting. The beginning of the end of his wait occurred when he and his daughter were watching a television documentary on the USS Intrepid. During the program, a fellow seaman was filmed receiving a Navy cross for heroism. Jones and his family reacted to the obvious slight by contacting Virginia Congressman Bobby Scott.

Scott contacted Naval Secretary John Dalton and the ball was rolling. "Appropriate recognition had not been awarded. I was privileged to sign the award. This is an

act that should have been awarded 50 years ago. When it came to my attention we reviewed it with the appropriate procedures and it was clearly merited," the Secretary observed. Although it was 50 years late, a ceremony was held recently in the Capitol where the Jones family and friends got a chance to see history corrected. The Navy and other branches of the Armed Services are taking steps to improve. However, as the current problems at the Aberdeen Proving Ground and other facilities show, it is clear that a lot more work needs to be done. And in the past the playing field had been slightly level, there is no telling how many other African-American heroes would have been produced, recognized and awarded for their valor.

Perhaps the biggest lesson to be learned by Jones' case is to never lose faith. Congressman Scott and his staff should be commended for helping Robert Jones. Because this brave sailor got his just reward, the Armed Services in general and the Navy in particular, are well on the way to the type of equality that many dream of.

GEORGE WILSON is a 16-year Capitol Hill correspondent for the American Urban Radio Network.

Big U.S. tobacco, restitution and racism

By Gyasi A. Foluke
SPECIAL TO THE POST

"Then they shall confess their sin which may have done; and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed."

Numbers 5:7, The Holy Bible

As quoted above, the Judeo-Christian tradition includes the spiritual principle of restitution — restoring losses to those who have been injured. Moreover, this same principle is an essential part of the American legal system, embracing the concept of civil "equity," fairness or justice.

Indeed, this salutary principle is paradoxical, both simple and complex, based upon multiple implementing circumstances or contingencies in a specific context. And the context of the present focus, quite simply is big tobacco, those corporate purveyors of uncountable deaths, and white racism, a profuse societal sickness which, similarly, has caused astronomical deaths. Moreover and recently, racism has caused a degree of institutional embarrassment —

"thanks" to video and audio tapes on the Rodney King and Texaco cases respectively — revealing "secrets" that many blacks have always known.

Clearly, "the cat is out of the bag" and — perhaps — the "chickens are coming home to roost" for both of these theoretically related "institutions." For almost everyone now knows what, apparently, big tobacco executives have known for a long time, irrespective of their public denials or ostensibly blatant lies before the U.S. Congress; that is, their cigarette products are additive and kill millions of Americans yearly. Consequently and belatedly, these big tobacco tycoons are engaged in serious negotiations, but only as a result of unrelenting pressure; that is, they have been subjected to lawsuits by 24 states attempting to recover multimillion dollar costs of treating Medicaid patients for diseases caused by cigarette smoking. And \$300 billion is the latest (as May 5, 1997) monetary figure that is being discussed as payment or restitution or damages incurred from tobacco products.

Surely, those who support restitution by big tobacco com-

panies, also should support restitution or reparations—repairing the damage—for victims of white racism. For racism — much longer and more severe — has caused major damages to blacks, far in excess of any illness or death inflicted by big tobacco companies. Indeed, it is the devastating, cumulative results of such racism for over 500 years — that is the greater sin in this context. And this sin includes, but is not limited to, a documented "guesstimate" of 300 million deaths of black people (and still counting) since the mid-15th century, the beginning of the ignominious European-Arab slave trade in Africa, although the Arab slave trade began much earlier.

Accordingly, I encourage the dominant, misruling majority society to "confess their sin," and to "cease and desist" from their psychological denial, (like big tobacco) about incalculable damages caused by their racism. For damages they have inflicted, beyond physical deaths cited above, are both mental and emotional, including protracted unprecedented, uncompensated dehumanization, traceable to incivility —

uncivilized behavior. Moreover, cigarette smoking is a voluntary act ("addition" notwithstanding), in contrast to involuntary victimization by racism. Nonetheless, the misruling White majority, including the so-called "Christian Coalition," are conspicuously silent about the need for racial restitution, advocated for decades by some Americans, both black and white.

Yes, these hypocritical "Christians" ("scribes and pharisees") will preach loudly about "family values," while destroying families through their practice of both racial and sexual bigotry. And such despicable behavior includes their silence on racial reparations and the "bashing" of homosexuals, based upon their narrow-minded misinterpretations of the Bible, contravening Divine love, as taught by great avatars of history, like the Gospel Jesus.

One can "prove" almost anything, including chattel slavery, by misusing the Bible. And "slavemasters," past and present, have demonstrated their skill in twisting biblical Scripture to promote their dehumanizing agenda. Alas, "God wants spiritual fruit, not reli-

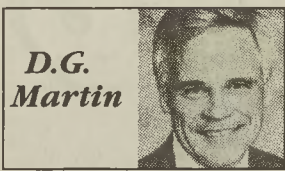
gious nuts."

Unquestionably, opponents of racial restitution, irrespective of race, are morally obligated to tell us — very specifically, and without imbalance reliance on the victim — how they would address, successfully, the prevailing racial inequality in society — unacceptable gaps in unemployment, poverty, underemployment, aggregate wealth, prison population, etc., ad nauseam. For example, the 1995 mean wealth nationally of white families, ages 51 to 61, was nearly \$300,000 in contrast to about \$71,000 for black families in this same age group. And this cumulative, privileged position of the white majority did not occur accidentally, but through calculated public policies which created this sinful, "disadvantaged" (read: "ripped-off") posture for the black minority.

Moreover, we cannot "dialogue" or talk these problems into oblivion, without proactive, corrective action which addresses this imbalance of resources between the races — caused by greed and ignorance.

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Just what is President Clinton up to these days?



D.G. Martin

"What is Bill Clinton up to anyway?"

It is a question a lot of people are asking these days. A question they ask before they give you their answers. "Nothing," a lot of them say.

"He is just marking time. Doing things to get favorable attention and make people like him. But nothing substantial. Nothing controversial. Nothing that makes any real difference

in the long run."

Or, along the same line, "Volunteer summits. Travel to foreign countries. Pushing for the FDR memorial to include a representation of Roosevelt's wheelchair. And lots of talk about motherhood and apple pie. They just get him good press, but they don't push the country to do what it needs to do."

"He is just trying to act like a constitutional monarch, the Queen of England for instance, cutting ribbons, making high minded statements, and appearing at state occasions."

Or, "He's changed his model from the activist and bully-pulpit preacher Teddy Roosevelt to

Dwight Eisenhower. Like Ike, he hopes to preside over a prosperous America, one that only needs to be encouraged and watched over — and changed only at the margins."

Others say he is just hiding and avoiding any controversy that might stir up anger against him and his family — anger that might drive forward the series of investigations, any one of which might somehow, someday bring down his presidency before its scheduled conclusion in January 2001.

In a recent edition of "The New Yorker" the reporter and columnist Joe Klein takes up this question.

Klein, in case you don't

remember, is "Anonymous" who wrote the successful fictional account of Clinton's 1992 campaign, "Primary Colors." That book made him millions of dollars, and won him the scorn of many Clinton supporters. It marks him as an informed, though not necessarily objective, student of the Clinton presidency.

Klein thinks that Clinton and his administration are simply "exhausted."

Some friends and members of the administration suggest that the president's knee injury has taken a heavy toll—and made him very depressed.

Klein acknowledges that Bill Clinton has always been eager

to please — a quality that is an important contributor to his great success as a politician and leader.

But, he says, "The distance between being eager to please and being unwilling to offend may seem small, but it is not insignificant. One is active and optimistic, the other is reactive and dark...the aggressive need to be loved has been transformed into a more defensive impulse."

I hope Klein is wrong.

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