Commentary

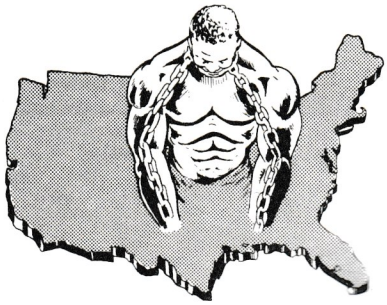
In my first book, *From The Browder File: 22 Essays on The African American Experience,* one essay stood out from the rest and elicited the greatest response from my readers. That essay was entitled, *The Creation of the Negro.* The question regarding the creation of the Negro, and his cultural significance, is one which has intrigued me all of my life.

As a young "Negro" child growing up in Chicago, I remember my grandfather's rejection of that designation and his refusal to check any box labeled "Negro" on applications, census forms or other documents. He always checked "other." My grandfather was a fiercely proud man who never accepted the negative stereotypes associated with the image of a Negro, and while he couldn't change how American society viewed him, he could and did determine how *he* viewed himself.

I also recall conversations with my grandmother who would often refer to herself and other Negroes as "Colored." I'd frequently ask her to be more specific and would inquire, "What color was this 'Colored' person, red, green, black or white?" It was only after much feigned aggravation that my grandmother would force herself to utter that dreadful word "Black." Eventually, and with much prompting on my part, my grandmother stopped using the terms "Colored" and "Negro" and began to regularly use the word "Black" in her vocabulary as a more appropriate description for people of African descent. After all, this was the 60's and "Black" people were just beginning to develop a positive appreciation for themselves.

It wasn't until the 1970's that I was able to clearly understand my grandmother's reluctance to use the word "black," and my grandfather's rejection of the word "Negro." In their day, to call someone "black" was a most serious insult which could result in a physical confrontation, and a Negro was viewed as a person unworthy of respect in the white man's world. I began to understand how my grandparents had struggled with an issue that I had often taken for granted.

During the course of their lifetime, my grandparents and their contemporaries had to endure being called "negro, nigger, coon, colored, blackie," any name except a child of God. Now they were being asked to refer to themselves as "Black." To them it was just another name - a name only to be used for



a brief period of time, and then discarded along with all the others which preceded it.

As a child of the 60's, I was fortunate to live in an era where the racial epithets hurled in my direction were minimized because of the white response to our newfound identity with blackness and Africa. I was blessed to live in a time when I could wear my ethnicity like a badge of honor instead of rejecting it because of inbred feelings of inferiority. In December of 1988, blacks in America were asked to accept another name change, one which reflected an even stronger sense of racial and cultural identification. That new name was "African American."

The media responded to this latest development by interviewing "former Blacks and Negroes" and asking them their feelings regarding this *new* name. Of the responses given, most fell within three categories which are reflected in the following comments:

> The first group of respondents stated, "I think the name 'African American' is appropriate because it correctly describes us as people of African descent who currently reside in America."
>
> The second group remarked rather jokingly, "I just got used to calling myself 'Black' after all these years, and now I'm being told that I should call myself an *African American*."
>
> The comments made by the third group of people surveyed were quite disturbing because most stated emphatically, "I'm not an African anything, I didn't come from Africa and I don't have anything to do with African people."

The latter comments were made most frequently by older citizens who had acquiesced to the decision to call themselves "Black" two decades earlier, but were not willing to make the next step and see themselves as African, or in any way related to African people. This attitude was created by a socialization process which instilled within the minds of most Negroes an unnatural hatred for dark skin pigmentation. This attitude is reflected in a disturbing put-down of blackness that has been a part of the African community for years. It states:

> If you're white, you're alright
> If you're yellow, you're mellow
> If you're brown, stick around
> But, if you're black, get back.

If it were considered an insult to call someone "black" in the 1920's, then calling them "African" was certainly an invitation

to physical abuse. And to dare refer to a Negro or Colored person as a "black African" was surely a justifiable reason to commit manslaughter. Throughout most of this century, Africans have been viewed by both blacks and whites as savage and ignorant subhuman beings. These degrading caricatures continue to exist in *The Phantom* comic strip and in the numerous remakes of Edgar Rice Burroughs' masterful novel of propaganda, *Tarzan, the Ape Man.*

The mere mention of the word Africa continues to evoke, in the minds of most people, images of Tarzan and Jane, jungles and half naked cannibals cooking "civilized" white people for dinner. Very few people realize that these stereotypes, and numerous others of a similar nature, were originally created by non-African writers, artists and movie producers. These images continue to negatively influence the thinking of millions of people worldwide.

Despite the "bum rap" Africa has received over the years, many of the old racist stereotypes are being challenged by Africans in the Diaspora who have accepted their African heritage, and now view themselves through culturally sensitive eyes. A new interpretation of some of those old images reveals some interesting findings:

- Tarzan, the reputed "King of the Jungle," would probably have died of skin cancer because he lacked sufficient amounts of melanin in his skin, which is necessary for survival in a tropical environment,

- The entire continent of Africa, relative to its overall size, has less jungle than all of Europe,

- Regarding the issue of cannibalism, a person of color would run a greater risk of being eaten in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, than in any country in Africa; and

- There have been more documented instances of whites eating humans than any other group of people.

It is important that African people look beyond the image of Africa which was created for them and the world by Europeans. It is also most important to remember that Africans were the only immigrants who came to America against their will. They were stripped of their history, and had no humanity that their slavemasters were willing to recognize. Their sole purpose for being was to provide free labor for the economic development of the country.

W.E.B. Du Bois reminded us that Africans were said to have been brought to America as "temporary immigrants" who would eventually be returned to Africa. The process for returning African Americans to Africa was indeed temporary. It began in 1822, with the creation of Liberia, which,

A New Eve Of Discovery!

So there really was an Eve in some kind of a Garden of Eden. She lived about 150,000 years ago in Kenya and she is the mother of us all.

That at least is the claim of the world's leading fossil hunter, anthropologist Richard Leakey in *In Search Of What Makes Us Human.....*

Leakey once believed that humankind evolved in independent groups scattered all over the Old World. But now he thinks that unlikely because geographically isolated groups would diverge and become reproductively isolated –in short different species unable to interbreed.

Africans have the deepest genetic roots. Though we are still a few fossils short of final proof, it is most likely humankind began there with a few thousand people and then spread all over the Old World.

Bible believers may take some comfort – but the Ku Klux Klan will be furious to think Eve was black.

(London) Daily Express, November 5, 1992

coincidentally, is the oldest independent "black" nation in Africa.

The name "Liberia" was derived from the Latin word liber, which means free. This new African nation was founded by an American charitable society with the expressed intention of providing a home for freed black slaves from America. Liberia was not only created by Americans, but its governmental structure, of an elected President, Senate and House of Representatives, was also modeled after the United States' system of government. The capital of Liberia, "Monrovia," was named in honor of James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States.

The transformation of enslaved people from *African* to *Negro* to *Colored* to *Black* and currently, to *African American,* has been quite an evolution. In eighteenth century America, "free blacks" saw themselves as African and incorporated their ethnicity into the names of their newly created institutions. For example, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1784, a Barbadian named Prince Hall, founded the first black Masonic Order, which he named African Lodge #459. Richard Allen, another resident of Philadelphia, founded the Free African Society in 1787 and the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in 1794.

After emancipation in the mid nineteenth century, black Americans no longer identified with the term "African" and began to refer to themselves as "Colored" or "Negro" in order to distinguish themselves from Africans living in Africa and elsewhere. Some of the black institutions that were developed in the early twentieth century began to reflect this new orientation in name - such as the National Association for the Advancement of *Colored* People (NAACP), 1909; the Association for the Study of *Negro* Life and History, 1915; and the National Council of *Negro* Women, 1935.

The name *Black* came into prominence after the birth of the civil rights movement in 1955, and gained wider acceptance with the development of the Black Power and Black Studies Movements in the 1960's. The latest name, *African American,* was officially ushered into existence in April, 1989, at the African American Summit in New Orleans, and is currently used by politicians, newscasters and individuals nationwide.

However, a nationwide telephone survey of 759 African Americans, conducted by the Joint Center for Political Studies in the fall of 1990, disclosed the following:

> Despite the increasing use of the term African-American, most Black Americans still prefer to be called Black; 72 percent preferred Black; 15 percent preferred African-American and 2 percent Negro, with the rest giving no opinion or other responses.

Identification with one's past (history) is an important step towards mental liberation, but the process must begin with the identification and use of your correct name. Noted historian Dr. John Henrik Clarke provides us with a working definition of history:

> History is a clock that people use to tell their political and cultural time of day. It is also a compass that people use to find themselves on the map of human geography. The role of history is to tell a people what they have been, and where they have been, what they are and where they are. The most important role that history plays is that it has the function of telling a people where they still must go and what they still must be.

Minister Malcolm X

History should tell a people who they are, where they came from and what their potential is as a people. If it fails to do so, it is useless. The name that a people call themselves must provide them with an understanding of their history by connecting them to a land mass, a language, a culture, a religion, a philosophy and so on. If a people's name fails to accomplish these simple tasks, then their name is useless.

The name "Colored" means little because all people are colored, varying in shades of melaninated pigment that range from "crow to snow," as referenced by historian Alice Windom. The names "Negro" or "Black" mean little because they do not serve the primary function of a name, which is to culturally orient a people to a specific land mass.

When people are free to travel and immigrate to other lands, they usually bring their name, language and culture with them. The Europeans who immigrated to America would later insist upon their independence from England, but their cultural orientation remained European. The official language of America is English, and the northeastern coast of the United States is still referred to as "New England." The states of New Hampshire, New Jersey and New York all refer to provinces in "jolly ole" England.

In 1682, the French explorer Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, claimed the entire Mississippi Valley for France. La Salle erected a cross and a column bearing the French coat of arms near the mouth of the river and named the region *Louisiana*, in honor of Louis XIV, the King of France. New Orleans, the former state capital of Louisiana, was named in memory of the city of Orleans in France. The city of St. Louis, Missouri, was named in honor of King Louis IX.

If a German Shepherd were born in Baltimore, Maryland, it would still be called a German Shepherd. If a French Poodle were born on the moon it would still be called a French Poodle. Malcolm X once stated that "if a cat had kittens in an oven, you wouldn't call them biscuits." What then would one call an African who had been enslaved, transported across the Atlantic Ocean and renamed "Negro?" This is the $64,000 question that the 35 million former Negroes, Coloreds and Blacks, currently living in the United States, are struggling to answer.

It is important to note that there is no such place as Negroland, Coloredland or Blackland. Africa is the point of origin for millions of people who now reside in the United States, the Caribbean Islands, and South America. Brazil has an estimated population of 60 million people of African descent, which is the largest population of African people living outside of the African continent. Worldwide, Africans and Chinese are the only people on earth whose numbers possibly exceed one billion.

In reference to the word "Negro," Dr. John Henrik Clarke states that the name means nothing and refers to nowhere. In the introduction to John Jackson's *Introduction to African*

Civilization, Dr. Clarke wrote:

> There is an urgent need to discard the term 'Negro Africa' and the word 'Negro' and all that it implies. This word grew out of the European slavery and colonial systems and it fails to relate the people of African descent to land, history and culture. There is no 'Negroland.' When one hears the word 'France' or 'French,' it is easy to visualize the land, history and culture of a people. The same thing is true of the words 'English' or 'Englishman.' When one hears or reads the word 'Negro,' the only vision that comes to mind relates to a condition.

One of the major events which led to the enslavement of African people was the Muslim conquest of Constantinople, which disrupted the spice shipments from India and the East to Europe. In 1441 Portuguese explorers were looking for a safe passage around the continent to India. They became the first nation to participate in the "forced importation" of Africans into Europe. The Portuguese were in search of pepper, nutmeg and cinnamon, but found the black skinned peoples whom they would later call Negroes, curious items of trade. According to Dr. Clarke:

> Some Spaniard or Portuguese took a descriptive adjective and made a noun of it. We, as a people, are neither a noun nor an adjective.

Robert Powell, a Jamaican of African ancestry, also questioned the significance of the word "Negro." In 1927 he authored a book entitled *The Human Side of A People and the Right Name.* Mr. Powell offers the following analysis:

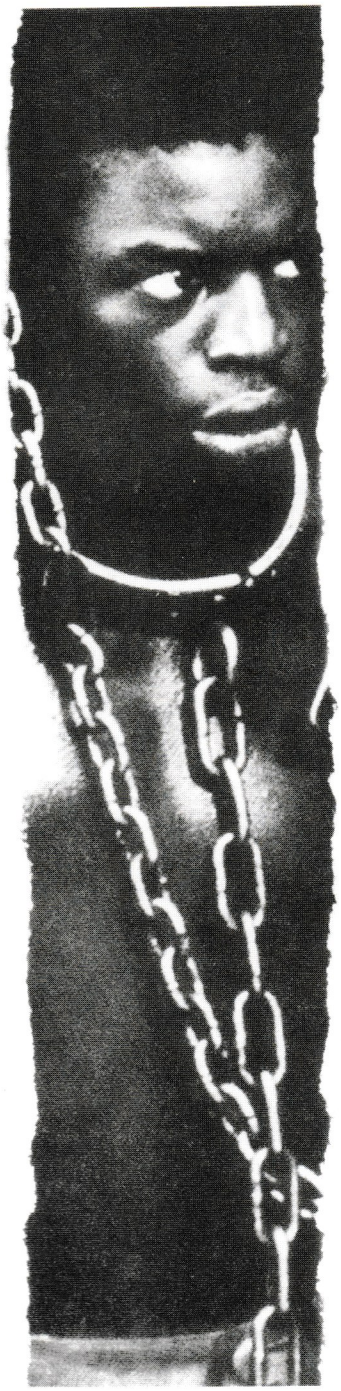
> The word 'Negro' was not only a superfluous term but one that carried with it a connotation of contempt, opprobrium and inferiority.

Mr. Powell's comments were certainly warranted, considering the depths to which historians, theologians and scientists descended in an attempt to substantiate the "inferiority of the Negro." Earl Conrad, author of *The Invention of the Negro,* offers this historical perspective:

> Fifty years before Columbus sailed westward, Catholic Spain and Catholic Portugal were engaged in a rivalry to sack Africa, to seize its inhabitants as slaves and to ship them back to Europe and sell them. Portugal, the first invader, sought and secured the blessings of the Popes and in a series of papal bulls issued from 1443 on, there is the spectacle of the Christian Vatican sanctify-

ing the enslavement of Africans on grounds that they were pagans....

> Prince Henry of Portugal...took the Africans...and sold them as slaves in the ports of Portugal. He asked absolution for the seaman...and Pope Eugenia IV in 1442, granted the request. By 1452, Pope Nicholas V gave King Alphonso of Spain general powers to enslave 'pagans.' Pagans meant the African who didn't yet know Christ....
>
> So controlling was the power of the Vatican in the conduct of trade into Africa that in 1481, Edward IV of England asked the Pope for permission to trade in Africa.



Five hundred eleven years after Edward IV's request, in February, 1992, Pope John Paul II visited Goree Island, a slave outpost located off the coast of Senegal in West Africa. The Pope passed through the "door of no return" and he toured cells in the "house of slaves" where tens of thousands of Africans were prepared for their voyage across the Atlantic to the New World. The Pope compared the house to the concentration camps of the 1930's, and begged forgiveness for the Christians involvement in the slave trade. Pope John Paul II remarked:

> How can one forget the enormous suffering inflicted, ignoring the most elementary rights of man, on the people deported from the African continent....From this African sanctuary of black pain, we begged the pardon from above.

Since religion played such a major role in the development and maintenance of slavery, the enslaver had to justify his actions by proving that Africans were less than human and that they had no soul to save. The more successfully scholars and theologians justified the inferiority of the slave, the more readily slavery was accepted within the hearts and minds of the slavemaster. In the nineteenth century it was believed that the Negro was more nonmoral than moral, and more inhuman than human. The following report was presented by the Rev. Dr. Tucker at the American Church Congress in 1883:

> I know of whole neighborhoods...where there is not one single Negro couple, whether legally married or not, who are faithful to each other for a few weeks. In the midst of a prayer-meeting I have known Negroes [to] steal from each other, and on the way home they will rob any hen-roost that lies conveniently at hand....Mention is further made of Negro missionaries guilty of the grossest immorality, living in open

> concubinage, addicted to thieving, lying, and every imaginary crime, yet all earnest and successful preachers, and wholly unconscious of hypocrisy. Their sins, universally known, did not diminish their influence with their race.

The 1884 edition of the Encyclopedia Br*itannica* went to great lengths to document the inherent inferiority of the Negro by stating that he

> occupies at the same time the lowest position in the evolutionary scale, thus affording the best material for the comparative study of the highest anthropoids and the human species.

In describing the skull of the Negro the editors stated that he possessed an

> ...exceedingly thick cranium, enabling the Negro to butt with the head and resist blows which would inevitably break any ordinary European's skull.

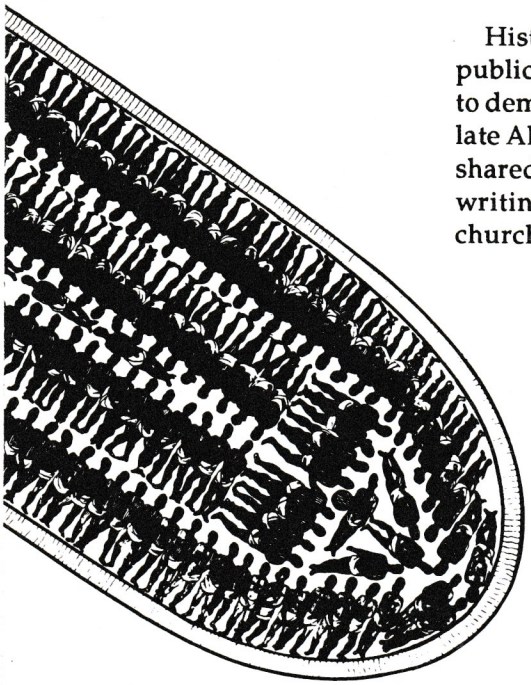
The Negro's skin was described as

> ...thick epidermis, cool, soft and velvety to the touch, mostly hairless, and emitting a peculiar rancid odor, compared by Pruner Bey to that of the buck goat.

Of particular interest in this volume were the comments made regarding the Negro's stymied capacity for intellectual thought:

> The cranial sutures...close much earlier in the Negro than in other races. To this premature ossification of the skull, preventing all further development of the brain, many pathologists have attributed the inherent mental inferiority of the blacks, an inferiority which is even more marked than their physical differences. Nearly all observers admit that the Negro child is on the whole quite as intelligent as those of other human varieties, but that on arriving at puberty all further progress seems to be arrested. No one has more carefully studied this point than Filippo Manetta, who during a long residence on the plantations of the Southern States of America noted that 'the Negro children were sharp, intelligent and full of vivacity, but on approaching the adult period a gradual change set in. The intellect seemed to become clouded, animation giving place to a sort of lethargy, briskness yielding to indolence. *We must necessarily suppose that the development of the Negro and White proceeds on*

different lines [emphasis mine]. While with the latter the volume of the brain grows with the expansion of the brain-pan, in the former the growth of the brain is on the contrary arrested by the premature closing of the cranial sutures and lateral pressure of the frontal bone.'



Africans were often packed aboard slave ships like sardines stuffed in a can. Some ships were designed to carry 500 or 600 Africans in approximately the same cubic capacity as ten double cabins on the luxury liner *Queen Elizabeth* 2.

History books, encyclopedias, scientific journals and other publications are teeming with inaccuracies which were written to demean African people in the eyes of the world. In 1972, the late Alex Haley spoke before a national group of educators and shared with them some of the research that he uncovered while writing his best-seller *Roots*. Haley described the role that the church played in the institutionalization of slavery:

> One of the most perverse things that I have found in my long research was that the people, in what might be called the hierarchy of slavery, the owners, the agents, the captains of those ships, strove in every possible way to somehow manifest that they were functioning in a Christian context....If at all possible, a slave ship sailing should sail on the Sabbath [for] there was a popular saying that 'God will bless the journey.' There was a practice they had, when a slave ship began loading slaves, if at all possible, the first two on board would be male and female who would be recorded in the log as 'Adam and Eve' and the rest were numbered 3, 4, 5 on up to 200 if they [could hold] that many.

Wherever one finds African people outside of the continent, one is witnessing "the visible expression of an economic and political reality as important in its day as Japanese car exports or OPEC oil are today," so says Le Baron Armel de Wismes of Nantes, France. De Wismes is the author of *Nantes Et Le Temps Des Negriers*, a publication which documents the history of the slave trade in Nantes. De Wismes discussed the broader implications of Columbus' "discovery" and the events that led to the enslavement of African people:

> Imagine...what happened after Columbus, when Europeans were first exposed to chocolate! It electrified the imagination and stirred a hunger in every town and city across the continent. They went wild over vanilla, tomatoes, corn, tobacco, potatoes, sugar, coffee, rum and other unheard of tastes from the New World.
>
> That's what slavery was all about....The man in the street was intoxicated by these things. The London tea rooms, the Paris cafes, the Italian espresso and ice cream parlors, the sweet and pastry shops all over Europe—all were possible only after the New World was

> discovered and only through the labor of millions of African slaves uprooted to America.

The injustices of the African enslavement might never have occurred were it not for the diseases and destruction the Spanish brought to the shores of the New World. Within 150 years of Columbus' landing, the native population was reduced from approximately 100 million to ten million, according to most cultural anthropologists. The subsequent decimation of the indigenous population practically destroyed the agriculture and economy of the "New World."

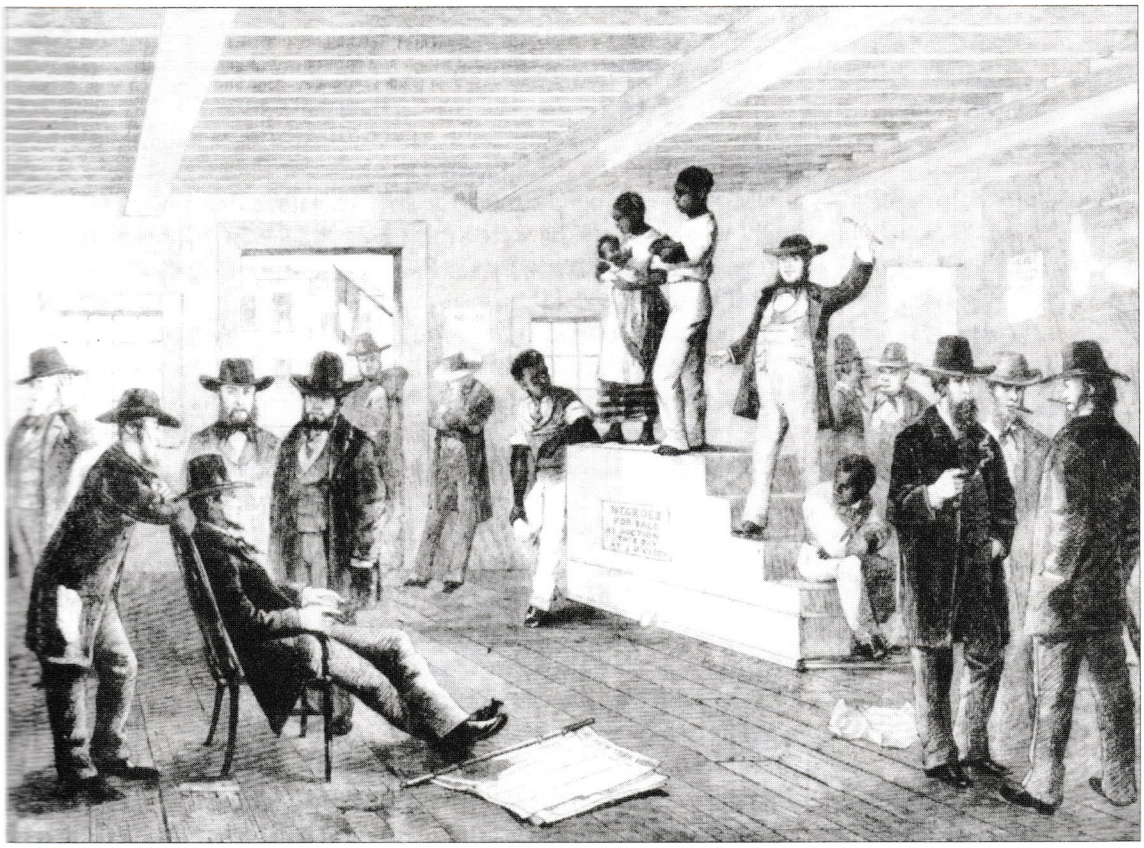
De Wismes continued to recount the role of Europe in the enslavement of Africans after the demise of the native American population:

> To fill the enormous labor void, first Spain, then all of Europe - with the exception of Russia - dabbled in the African slave trade. Farmers, merchants, princes, little old ladies with their life savings, even the hypocrite Voltaire, who railed against slavery in *Candide* - invested in schemes that promised and often delivered returns of 300 percent, 400, even 1,000 percent on their

Nothing about slavery horrified its critics more than the slave auction. The sentimental paternalism of American slaveholders could not get over the inconsistency of treating human beings as a form of real property. And it could not protect black children from being torn from their families under the auctioneer's hammer.

Cultural Atlas of Africa, edited by Jocelyn Murray.

Africans being auctioned in Virginia, 1861.



money. Cities like Liverpool, Seville and Nantes were the European capitals for this slave marketing.

> Thus began the "triangular trade" from Europe to Africa to America and back again, which established the first major transnational economy since the fall of Rome. In fact, the buying, shipping and employment of 12 million to 25 million slaves (no one knows how many blacks were forced into the African diaspora) constituted a major part of all international economic transactions in the period 1451 to 1870.
>
> Whether we care to admit it or not, it [slavery] formed the bedrock on which our current world economy is built and...it surely explains in part the social and political frictions and misunderstandings between the world's whites and colored peoples to this day.

Hand in hand with the enslavement of African people came the destruction of African civilization and the loss of a culture, which the European would later say never existed. Dr. Clarke made the following remarks on the subject:

> There has been a deliberate destruction of African culture and the records relating to that culture. This destruction started with the first invaders of Africa. It continued through the period of slavery and the colonial system. It continues today on a much higher and more dangerous level. There are now attempts on the highest academic level to divide African history and culture within Africa in such a manner that the best of it can be claimed for Europeans, or at the very least, Asians. That is the main purpose of the Hamitic and the Semitic hypothesis in relationship to African history.

The manipulation of African history has been so thorough that many people now mistakenly believe Egypt is not in Africa. It is as if Egypt has mysteriously detached itself from the continent and floated off to a nebulous place called the "Middle East." The ridiculousness of this issue is mind boggling, particularly when one considers that there are islands in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic (Corsica, Greece and England) that are physically separated from Europe, but are still considered a part of that continent. Any attempt to separate Egypt from Africa is an attempt to disassociate African people from the Nile Valley, and to deny the role that Africans played in influencing Western (European) culture and civilization.

There currently exist hundreds of examples of Africans having lived in Europe, but they are often ignored. There was Pushkin in Russia, Hannibal in Italy, Beethoven in Germany and Aseop in Greece. Traditionally, all of these individuals

have been portrayed as European, despite evidence to the contrary. The Moors occupied Spain for more than 350 years, and there was a strong African presence in ancient Britain. People of African descent have had a major impact on European culture for hundreds of years, and yet no one asks whether the Europeans were black.

Diop once stated that cultural alienation has been used as a weapon of domination for thousands of years, but the full impact of his statement didn't hit me until I visited the Museum of Man in Paris. While in the lobby of this museum, I was taken aback by two signs directing patrons to an exhibit on the upper level. One sign read "Black Africa," the other "White Africa," and both signs had arrows pointing in opposite directions.

Why is color used to denote racial diversification on one continent, but not on another? At this moment there are hundreds of thousands of Africans from the Continent and the Caribbean who currently reside in Europe, but one never hears the term "White Europe" and "Black Europe." J.A. Rodgers, in his three-volume work *Sex and Race,* cites the existence of numerous Africans who lived in Europe as kings, queens, popes and saints. Their very presence justifies the use of the term "Black Europe," if history were to be recorded fairly.

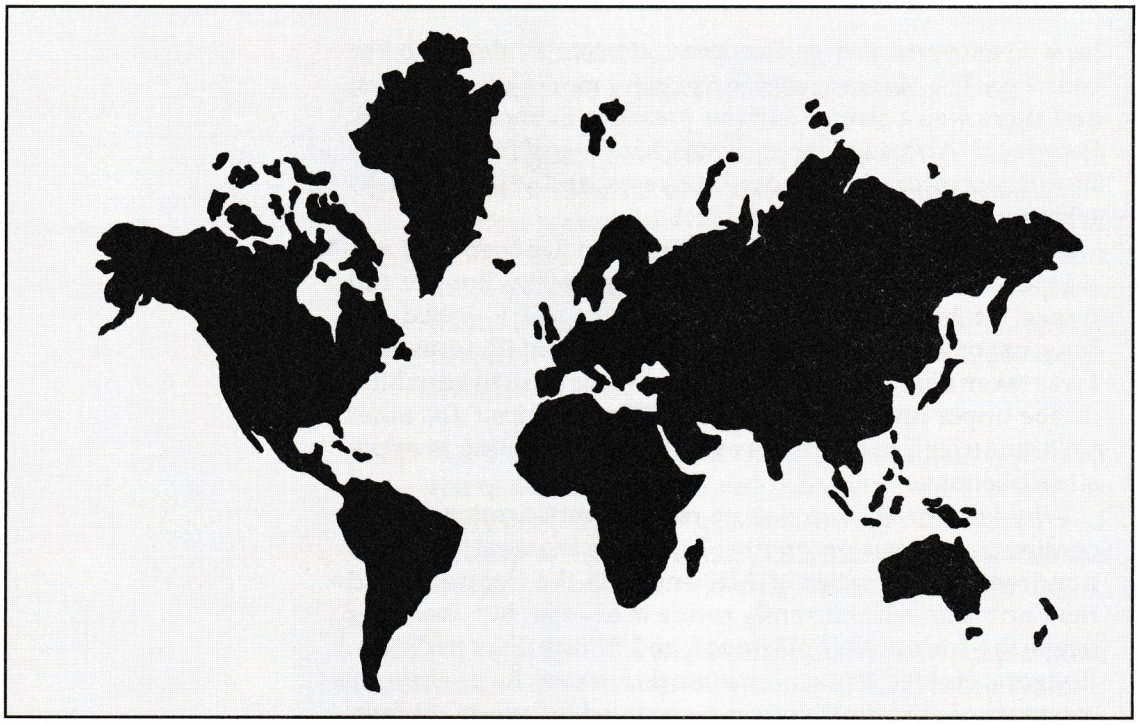
But history is not fair; neither is it always true. History is often told from the perspective of the victor in any conflict, and always at the expense of the victim. The French general Napoleon Bonaparte once asked, "What is history, but a fiction agreed upon?" Winston Churchill, former prime minister of Great Britain, was heard to state emphatically that "History is going to be kind to Britain, because I'm going to write it."

Indeed, history has been very kind to Europeans because *they* have written it and in many instances, it has been the fiction (lie) agreed upon. Because of a global system of miseducation which currently exists, the average person honestly believes that civilization began in Europe, and that the rest of the world waited in darkness for the Europeans to bring them the light. For more than 500 years, Europeans have controlled and manipulated the image and information of the world. Consider the following:

- Since the sixteenth century, Europeans have controlled the map making industry and have projected their culture as the primary point of reference.

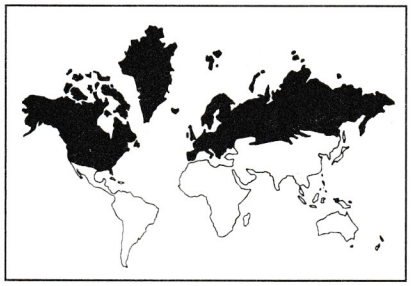
- The geographic orientation of most maps to "North" exists only because Europe is in the "North."

- If one were to draw diagonal lines from corner to corner across the world map, western Europe would lie at the center.



The Mercator Projection Map

Ward L Kaiser, author of *A New View of the World*, provides us with this historical perspective on the map currently in use worldwide.

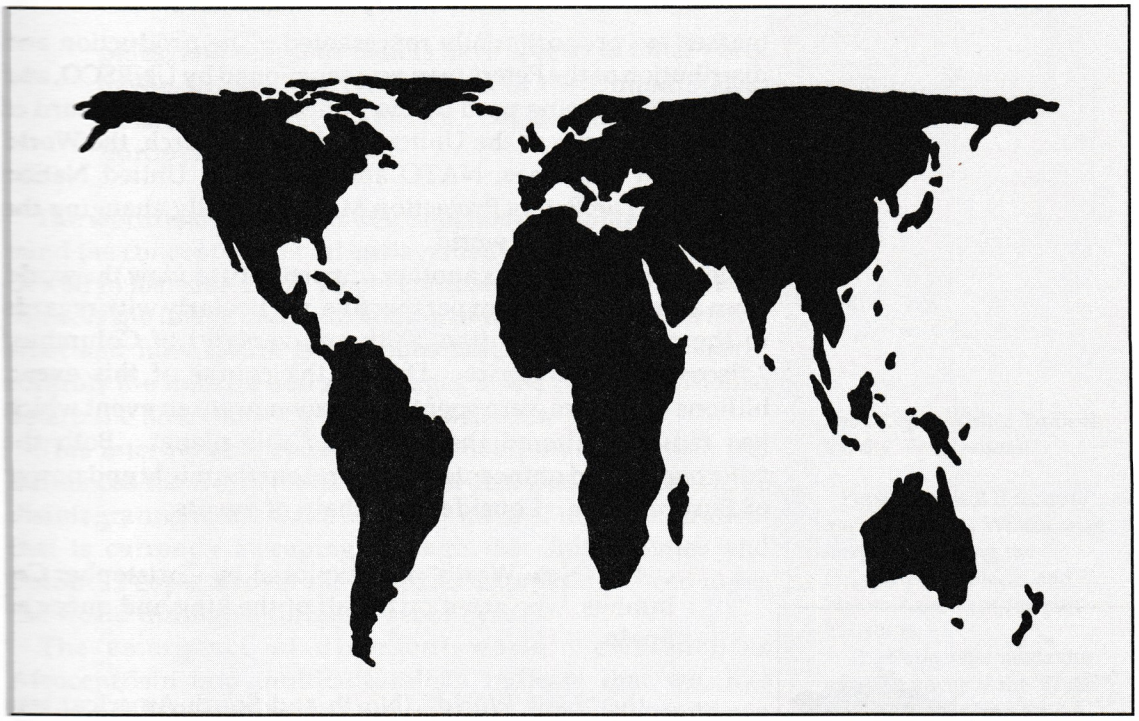


The traditional Mercator map seriously distorts and misrepresents the true shapes and proportions of the landmasses of the world. The Mercator map shows the northern hemisphere (18.9 million square miles of the land above the equator) to be more than two-thirds of the total landmass. It compresses the southern hemisphere (38.6 million square miles) into the remaining one-third. This is not compatible with the objective reality of the modern scientific age.

> The typical map in use today is the Mercator map which was developed in 1569 for European navigators by the German cartographer, Gerhard Kremer, whose surname (meaning 'merchant' in English) becomes Mercator in Latin.

Mr. Kaiser goes on to state:

> The point is not that Mercator deliberately falsified the picture. He was following almost universal precedent in setting his own land at the center of everything. This had, in fact, a positive effect in this sense: it facilitated the use of his map by European navigators in the age of exploration.
>
> We, however, are not Sixteenth Century European sailors. For us, the continued widespread use of the Mercator as a general-purpose map presents serious problems. We are neither fair to Kremer nor acting in our own best interests when we force his map to function beyond its originally intended use or its capabilities....The Mercator map, as it is most often used today, lends support to the assumption...that nationalism or ethnocentrism or even racism is all right:



The Peters Projection Map

that it is grounded in geographical realities.... Ethnocentrism or racism is the belief that one's own people or race are superior to all others. To see it in its extreme form, look at apartheid in South Africa. Less obvious, but still significant, forms of the problem exist all around us, and within us. The sources of this dangerous disease are many, but surely one of its subtle supports is the pervasive use of a map that, in spite of all known facts:

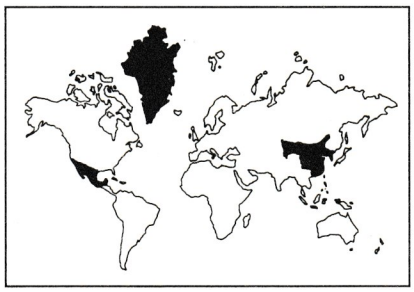
-enlarges those areas of the world historically inhabited by whites,

-shifts those same areas to the heart and center of the world's stage, where they do not belong, and

-minimizes the importance of what we think of as 'the South,' including most of what we designate as the 'Third World.'

A new world map was created in 1974 by Dr. Arno Peters, a German historian and cartographer. Dr. Peters' map (appropriately called the Peters Projection Map) represents all land masses according to relative size. For example, Europe is shown in its correct proportion, relative to all surrounding land masses and Africa is accurately shown to be larger than the land mass that was once referred to as the Soviet Union.

The Peters Projection Map does exhibit shape distortion of land area, but it is considered a small tradeoff because all land

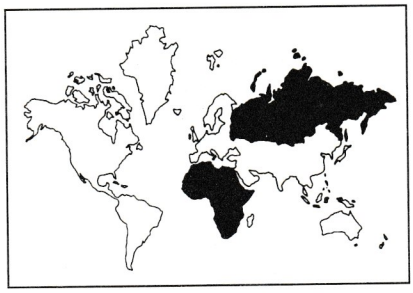


The distortion of the Mercator map can best be shown when comparing Greenland with Mexico and China. The total landmass of Greenland is 0.8 million square miles. It appears much larger than China and almost as large as the whole continent of North America. In reality, China is almost five times larger than Greenland and Mexico is nearly as large as Greenland even though the landmass of Mexico is only a small portion of the total landmass of North America.

masses are proportionally represented. The production and distribution of the Peters map was sanctioned by UNESCO, and it is currently being used by the Vatican, the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, the World Council of Churches, NATO and numerous United Nation agencies. The Peters Projection Map is literally changing the way people view the world.

1992 also afforded us another opportunity to view the world from a new and different perspective, particularly with regards to the quincentenary (the 500th anniversary) of Columbus' "discovery" of America. During the course of this event, billions of dollars were spent to commemorate an event which has radically altered the history of this planet. Both the "discovery" and quincentenary represent the might and power of Eurocentrism. Consider this chain of events:

> -the "New World" was explored by Christopher Columbus, who acted on behalf of the king and queen of Spain
>
> -the "New World" (North and South America) was later named in honor of Italian born explorer Amerigo Vespucci
>
> -the "New World" was subsequently divided into a northern and southern zone and colonized by the Spanish, Portuguese, British and French



Another example of the skewing of the northern hemisphere where the majority of the population is white, is the landmass of the former Soviet Union. Compared to the size of Africa, the landmass of the old Soviet Union appears to be more than *twice* the size of Africa. *In reality, Africa is considerably larger.*

The "discoverers of America" were nothing more than an invading force who brought, along with their armies, their language, culture and religious traditions and imposed them upon the native populations. These invading forces subsequently exterminated the indigenous inhabitants and replaced them with an imported and enslaved population. Nowhere in the annals of humanity will you find such prolonged acts of barbarism imposed upon people of a different race.

If there exists a "North America" and a "South America," why could there not also be an "East Asia" and a "West Asia?" What could justifiably be called "West Asia" is now referred to as "Europe." Hundreds of years ago a decision was made to draw an imaginary line through Asia and everything west of that line was called "Europe" and designated as a continent, contrary to the accepted definition. No body of water separates Europe from Asia. It is separated by an invisible boundary, drawn in order to establish the primacy of the continent, which the World Book Encyclopedia describes as:

> ...the birthplace of Western civilization. No other continent has had such great influence on world history. From the time of the ancient Greeks, European political ideas, scientific discoveries, arts and philoso-

> phies, and religious beliefs have spread to other parts of the world. The civilizations of the United States, Canada, [and] Latin America...developed largely from European civilization.

The worldwide manipulation of history and maps brings to mind the concept of mental enslavement described by George Orwell in his book *1984*. To paraphrase Mr. Orwell: Whoever controls the image and information of the past will determine what and how future generations will think; and, whoever controls the information and images of the present, will also determine how those same people will view the past.

This interminable cycle of mind manipulation, which has influenced the world for hundreds of years, now appears to be disintegrating in the wake of a tidal wave of multiculturalism that is currently sweeping through the United States and Europe. People all over the world are expressing a need to see the world through a different set of eyes.

The emergence of divergent world views such as Afrocentrism and multiculturalism indicate that we, like Columbus 500 years before, are standing on the threshold of a new age of discovery, and that a shift from a Eurocentric to a more global perspective is rapidly taking place. The events which have set this shift into motion are irreversible. They began with the decimation and enslavement of the first African man, woman and child half a millennium ago.

Pope Urges Whites To Seek Blacks' Forgiveness!

Pope John Paul II recently maintained that Whites must never stop asking the forgiveness of Blacks and Native Americans for past injustices.

The Pope, who made the announcement at the Vatican, said: "This demand for forgiveness has to be made above all to the first inhabitants of the New World, the Indians, and also to those who were deported as slaves from Africa for heavy labor."

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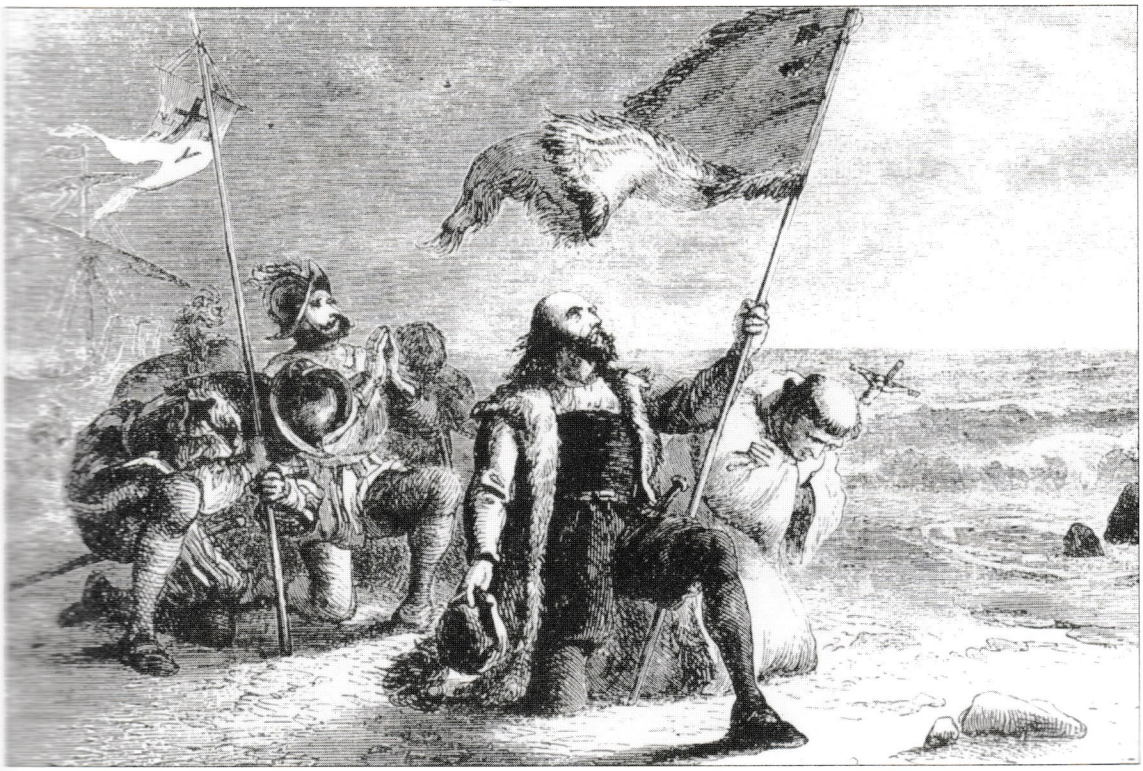
Columbus claims the "New World" in the name of Spain and God.