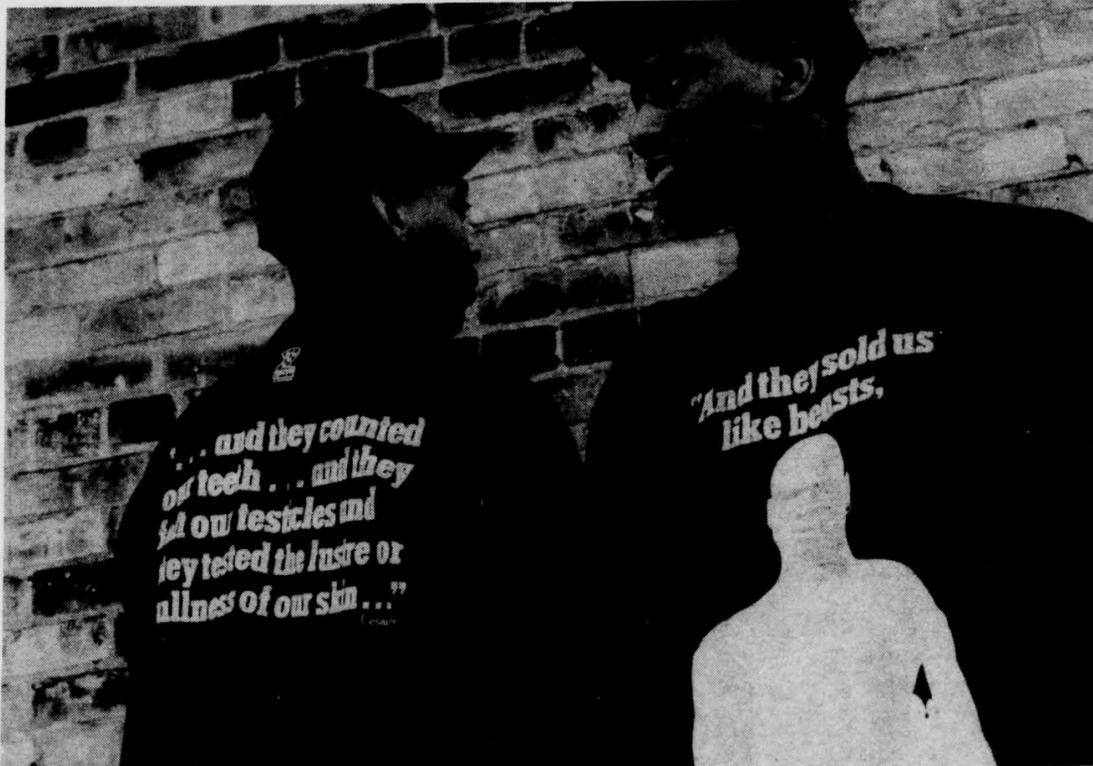


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# editorial Not negro, not Black, but African

By Trevor Burnett

Although slavery was abolished over a century and a half ago and Blacks have been freed physically and mentally, many of us are still dead and the current debate over what to call ourselves is evidence of this.

Last Summer my friend Ajamu and I were selling T-shirts at the Canadian National Exhibition. Hustling T-shirts can be very boring (you can be standing up for up to twelve hours), so to amuse ourselves we decided to call out in Jamaican patois to every Black person that passed by "Yes Africans, come een," beckoning them to come and check out our merchandise.

People passed by laughing, and shaking their heads. Some stopped by to tell us they were not Africans. We asked them to tell us where Black Land or Negroidia were. We even told them that a White man, be he American, Canadian or British is still a Caucasian, and a person born in China or Japan is still an Asian. Even with all our explanations, we still didn't convince them.

One older man was so adamant that he was he was a "negro from Jamaica" heaven or earth would have had to pass away before he changed his mind.

Another man argued the point for about five minutes, asserting he was no African, he was a Jamaican. When he saw he was not convincing Ajamu, he got angry, and told Ajamu to "gu weh bwoy ya eediot," and stormed off.

Several minutes later a posse of Black youths passed by. I yelled out, "yes Africans come through", and beckoned them over. One guy got really pissed off. He yelled back "eh boy who you ah call African, go weh bwoy you ah pussy," he followed that by kissing his teeth and a yelling a series of Bombo, and blood clauts. The dude actually looked like he wanted to fight over it. I looked at Ajamu and shook my head. Ajamu said "he probably thought you were calling him ugly," I told Ajamu, "if I wanted to call him ugly I would have called him Shabba (Ranks)."

These incidents are not isolated ones, too many of us still consider ourselves everything but Africans. Those of us who are a bit more "aware" of what's going on realize this hatred of or distancing from Africa was something that was taught to us by White society. As Arnold Masters, a race relations consultant for the Toronto Board of Education, who spoke at York last February said, "when the slaves were brought to the New World they were vehemently taught to forget you are African, remember you are negro or Black."

Even Malcolm X would point out that popular media portrayed Africa as a land teeming with savages and cannibals with bones in their noses, naked and swinging on vines (anybody who has watched those old Tarzan movies would have to agree). When we see those images we didn't want to be associated with Africa - so we developed very negative attitudes about the place and in our distancing we rushed for refuge for any name, other than "African."

We must remember also that as Africans we have thousands of years of golden history. In North America or in the West we have less than a thousand years. Why then do we want to start our history in slavery? This is what we do when we denote ourselves, as being from these small islands instead of the continent of our origin.

I'm not advocating abandoning "Jamaican," "Trinidadian," "Canadian," or even "Black," (though it would probably help) because we will always be these things. I use the term "Black" and "African" alternatively because they are one and the same to me.

What I've observed though, is through denoting ourselves by small islands, there is an accompanying attitude of "forget Africa," and this is the problem. We should try to think of ourselves more as one people.

We aren't fighting for liberation as ethnic groups, but as Africans. Just as certain trailblazers got us to change from the terms, "negro" and "coloured" to "Black" to "African American-Canadian" we should use the term African more and more until it becomes completely acceptable to us.

Some Black people have said to me that indigenous Africans don't even think of us in the diaspora as Africans, while it may be true in many cases, we have to remember it is a result of the supreme divide and conquer job which is unfortunately still a long way from being rectified.

## The name of one cold, short, month

by Jacen Braithwaite

No doubt some people were angry, enraged even, at the fact Excalibur's Black Writers Caucus chose to call this supplement the Black History Month rather than African History Month.

The decision was unanimous. However, we would like to remind anyone who is not comfortable with the title that this project has been in production since September, and the Caucus was open to all on campus.

One of the hopes of the Black Writers' Caucus was to reach a large audience, particularly Black youth. We felt that unfortunately at this point in history the level of consciousness in society does not allow us to identify with the term "African." The sad fact is that the title "Africa" might alienate some people from the true nature of the paper, and get them caught up in the title rather than the information we are trying to present.

We in the Caucus agree there is a need for Black people to identify with our African history. But like we said before, we also feel that the paper should reach a large audience. It is our hope that in the very near future we can title such a supplement without any type of debate over such trivial matters such as the title.



**"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origins and culture is like a tree without roots."**

Marcus Garvey



photo by Anthony Cohen

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**Special thanks:** To the Excalibur staff who put in extra hours to help with this paper and an extra special thanks to members of the Black Writers' Caucus who contributed articles, proofread, typed, argued, went to meetings, came in on weekends and slept on sofas to

put this issue.  
 peace,  
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# Knowledge is power

by Trevor Burnett

Because of slavery and racism, Africans have been denied a true knowledge of themselves. This is an omission that no other race has suffered from as much as Africans.

Most Blacks have been made to believe that all their foreparents ever did was pick cotton as useless "niggers" on a plantation, "shucking," "jiving," saying "no suh" and "yes suh" and never contributing anything to the advancement of civilization.

A Black person studying their history is like someone believing for a long time that both parents were dead, then finding out they are very much alive and productive. The knowledge is empowering.

If knowing Black history is important for Africans it is also important for Europeans. This is not to say that we need their stamp of approval — we should already approve of ourselves, our history and our culture. Nevertheless, we live in a racist society dominated by white people. Many whites are racist because they have been mis-educated; if they were given a proper view of history and the contributions of Black people, perhaps they would be less racist in their attitudes.

How many people know that Hannibal, who was one of the greatest military minds of all time and whose methods have been used by countless armies through the ages, was a Black man? Or that ancient Egypt, often portrayed as a white civilization, was in fact predominantly Black for most of its 26 dynasties and achieved great advances in science, technology and architecture (the majority of the great pyramids and sculptures were undertaken or built during the years of the Black Pharaohs). By the time the Greeks and Asians



graphic • Derek Marshall

got to Egypt it was already in decline. Even king Tutankhamen was Black.

Another famous African who we have been taught was European was the wise slave Aesop.

It is not only things done in ancient Africa that need to be remembered. How many us know that Rock music originated from Negro Spirituals and Gospel Music?

Black contributions to sport should also be studied. Everybody

knows about Joe Louis, but how many people know of the great men of the old Negro League in Baseball?

Other famous Blacks include Garrett Morgan, the inventor of automatic traffic lights. Lewis Latimer improved on Thomas Edison's light bulb. And Dr Charles Drew was a pioneer of blood plasma preservation, the precursor to the blood bank. Drew died in an automobile accident in 1950 — the irony was that his life may have been saved if he had received immediate medical attention. However, white hospitals wouldn't allow him to receive the blood transfusions needed to save his life.

We could go on for a long time, because this is only a partial list of Black achievements that most people don't know about.

The point of the above illustrations is not to romanticize everything coming out of Africa, or to be disrespectful to things done by Europeans. All races have made contributions, and most Blacks are aware and appreciative of the great contributions of Europeans. However, it's time

**"These people make me laugh the way they like to change up the past/ so when you're there in class learning his story/ learn a little bit of your story the real story."**

KRS—One

# HISTORY

"If you don't know your past, you don't know your future."

- unknown

## Africans in history (What they didn't teach you in history class)

**Contributions to Medicine**  
"During the millennia Blacks in Ancient Egypt made numerous contributions to medicine and were acknowledged as the inventors of the art of medicine. They produced the earliest physicians, medical knowledge, and medical literature. They contributed to the development of medicine in ancient Greece. Ancient Writers affirm this."  
• Frederick Newsome M.D., *Journal of African Civilizations*.

**Contributions to Art**  
"The first artist was Black. The oldest sculpture in the world, the 'Bas-Relief of White Rhinoceros with Ticks,' was found in South Africa."  
• J.A Rogers, *Sex and Race Vol.1*.

**Contributions to Science**  
"Socrates (an African) in the Phaidros, called the Egyptian god Thoth the inventor of writing, astrology and astronomy. Herodotus had a similarly high opinion of Egyptian science, stating that Greeks learned geometry from the Egyptians."  
• Dr. John Papperdemos, Professor of Physics, University of Illinois

**Contributions to Astronomy**  
"The complex knowledge of the Dogon of Mali about the Sirius star system is sending shockwaves around the scientific world. The West African people have not only plotted the orbits of stars circling Sirius, but have revealed the extraordinary nature of one of the densest and tiniest stars in our galaxy. What is most astonishing about their

revelations is that Sirius B is invisible to unaided eye."  
• Hunter Adams III, *African Observers of the Universe*

"The Egyptians by their study of astronomy discovered the solar year and were the first to divide it into twelve parts — and in my opinion their method of calculation is better than the Greek; for the Greeks, to make the seasons work out properly, intercalate a whole month every other year, while the Egyptians make a year consist of twelve months of thirty days each and every year intercalate five additional days, so complete the regular seasons."  
• Herodotus, *The Histories*

"As early as 300 B.C. Africans built an astronomical site at Namoratungua, in Northwestern Kenya and an accurate and complex prehistoric calendar, based on its astronomical alignments was developed in East Africa."  
• Godfrey C. Bums M.D, *Journal of African Civilizations*

**African Steel Making**  
"Researchers demonstrate evidence of a prehistoric iron smelting technology that produced steel 1500 to 2000 years before Europe."  
• Godfrey C. Bums, *Early African Sciences*

"The temperature achieved in the blast furnace of the African steel making machine was higher than any achieved in a European machine until modern times. It was roughly 1,800 degrees Celsius, some 200 to 400 degrees Celsius higher than the highest reached in European cold blast furnaces."  
• Ivan Van Sertima, *Blacks in Science*

that Europeans and others learned about us.

It is important we take more of an interest in our history. Too many of us think that learning our history is unimportant. Many think that if it doesn't make you rich then it's of no use.

The rulers of this society know that if we knew our history, we would be much more productive

and self-sufficient. That's why much of this knowledge has been hidden or brushed aside. But with each passing year more discoveries are made that bring Black people's place in history to the fore.

Brothers and sisters, the sooner we get to know our own history the better off we'll be as a people.

## A history of slavery in the Great White North

By Gayann Browne, with selected information obtained from CUP Canadian University Press (Maxine Clarke, Ron Charles)

1606 Mathieu Da Costa accompanies the Champlain Poutin court expedition to North America, making him the first recorded person of African descent to settle in what is now Canada.

Because he is a Mi'kmaq translator, he was probably in New France before 1636, possibly with Portuguese fishing expeditions. Da Costa dies at the Port Royal settlement in the winter of 1637.

1629 Olivier LeJeune is the first recorded African slave in New France. He is brought to the colony, along with David Kirke,

one of the English invaders who captured New France from Samuel de Champlain.

Kirke sells LeJeune to a French clerk who collaborated with the English. When New France is given back to France, the clerk gives LeJeune away before fleeing.

1689 After continued demands by colonists, Louis XIV officially sanctions slavery in Canada, although France forbade slavery.

An official letter informed colonists on May 1: His Majesty finds it good that the inhabitants of Canada import negroes there to take care of their agriculture, but remarks that there is a risk that these negroes, coming from a very different climate, will perish in Canada; the project would then become useless.

Despite concerns, by 1759, there are over 1,000 slaves owned by New France families, according to historian Marcel Trudel's book "L'Esclavage au Canada Français." Slaves are owned by religious orders, notaries and doctors. Among the slave traders is James McGill, the founder of McGill University.

1734 Marie-Joseph Angélique, a slave owned by a Montreal widow, Madame de Francheville, is executed for setting fire to her master's stable in an escape attempt. As a result, a quarter of the city catches fire.

In all the stable fire burns 16 buildings, including a church, Hotel Dieu and a convent. Angélique is arrested and convicted for arson. Her original sentence is to have her hands cut off and to be burned at the stake. In the

end, she is dragged through the streets bearing a sign "Incendiaire," tortured until she confesses her crime, and is then hung in the public square.



1778 Fleury Mesple starts the Montreal Gazette and declares that one of the newspaper's main functions will be to publish announcements about escaped slaves.

The following appears in the Gazette's fourth issue: Run away on the 14th a slave belonging to the widow, Duffy Desoumier, aged about 35 years, dressed in stripped linen of medium height and tolerable stoutness. Whoever will bring her back will receive a reward of six dollars and will be repaid any costs proven to have been incurred in finding her.

1783 Arrival of the black Loyalists from the United States. Many of them establish communities in Nova Scotia.

Although the Loyalists are promised 100 acres of farming land for supporting the British in the American War of Independence, black Loyalists receive varying amounts of poor quality land, and in some cases none at all.

1791 Loyalists settle in Upper Canada in the Niagara and Amherstburg areas. The British grant freedom to runaway blacks who become Loyalists and at the same time allow white Loyalists to bring other blacks as slaves.

This policy leads to many incidents since local authorities have problems differentiating those who are free and those who are not. It also creates social tension in the black community between slaves and free people. (Of the Loyalists who come to Canada, more than 10 per cent are black.)

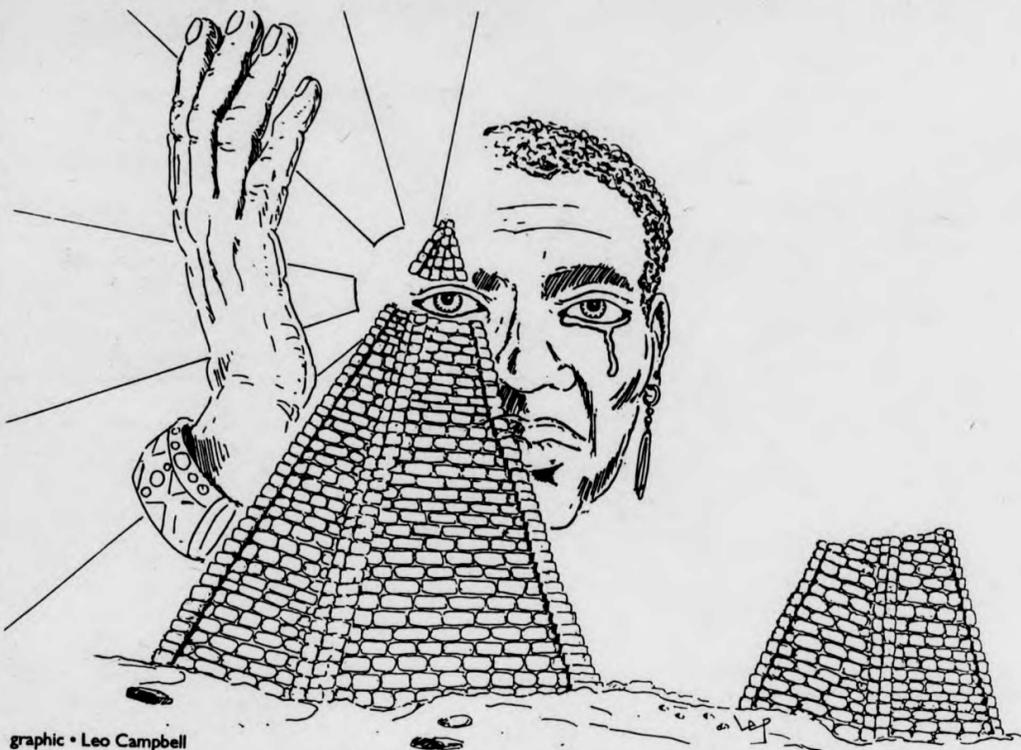
1793 With the influence of John Graves Simcoe, the first-parlia-

Compiled by Leroi Cox  
**African  
 Diasporic History  
 And Analysis**

This is not The Definitive Reading List. These books should constitute a cherished part of the personal library of students, teachers, professors or anyone who wishes to broaden his or her intellectual horizons. Most of these books can be obtained at Third World Books Inc. at 942 Bathurst St.

1. **Origins of African Civilization**  
Cheikh Anta Diop
2. **Civilization or Barbarism: The Cultural Unity of Black Africa**  
Cheikh Anta Diop
3. **They Came Before Columbus**  
Ivan Van Sertima
4. **Ancient Egypt: The Light of the World**  
Gerald Massey
5. **Black Athena**  
Martin Bernal
6. **Stolen Legacy**  
George James
7. **Orientalism**  
Edward Said
8. **African Religions and Philosophy**  
John Mbiti
9. **Cultural Genocide in the Black and African Studies Curriculum**  
Yosef Ben Jochannan
10. **Black Man of the Nile and His Family**  
Yosef Ben Jochannan
11. **African Origins of European Religions**  
Yosef Ben Jochannan
12. **Origins of African Civilizations**  
John Jackson
13. **Black Marxism**  
Cedric Robinson
14. **The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual**  
Harold Cruse
15. **Class Struggle in Africa**  
Kwame Nkrumah
16. **How Europe Underdeveloped Africa**  
Dr. Walter Rodney
17. **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**  
Paulo Freire
18. **Black Skin, White Masks**  
Frantz Fanon
19. **The Wretched of the Earth**  
Frantz Fanon
20. **The Autobiography of Malcolm X**
21. **A History of Blacks in Canada**

# 6000 years of history



graphic • Leo Campbell

by Courtney Kazembe

**T**he history of African people is glorious and prolific, and the contributions that Africans have made to the world are indelible and overwhelming. Yet only a few years ago, historians wrote books on world history telling their readers that Africa and Africans had no history.

History is one of the most effective tools used to keep Africans and other oppressed people in mental slavery. Mainstream history contends that nearly everything of significance is due to European creativity, imagination, intellect and labour. This misrepresentation of history promotes the myth of White supremacy and its offspring — Black inferiority. It obstructs mental, intellectual and spiritual growth making true liberation near impossible.

It is therefore of utmost importance for us to fully understand the contributions that Africans have made to the world. These contributions set the record straight and invalidate "his-story" — the mainstream's distorted view of the past.

The first golden age of Africa began in prehistoric times, though there were other 'golden ages' in Ethiopia, Egypt, North Africa, West Africa and South Africa — starting with the pyramid age of Ancient Kimit (now called Sudan

and Egypt) around six thousand years ago and continuing through the Golden age of West and East Africa, spanning over five thousand years.

Egyptian culture was central to ancient African civilization. Northern Africans originated and excelled in most areas of what is now considered modern studies — studies credited to Europeans.

In Architecture, Pharaoh Rameses II of Kimit built Abu Simbet, one of the world's largest temples in ancient Nubia in the XIX dynasty 1395 B.C.E. This temple is so massive that Europe's three largest cathedrals could fit in it. It was brilliantly designed so that rays of the rising sun could penetrate the deepest room, 180 feet back from the entrance.

One of the most fascinating architectural wonders in history is the great Zimbabwe, a stone city in Southern Africa dating back to 1500 B.C. The centrepiece of this city is the Imba Huru (Great Enclosure). The Imba Huru was 250 metres long, composed of 15,000 tons of granite and housing numerous complexes, several secret passageways and an enclosure for iron-smelting and iron-maintenance.

In astronomy, the oldest known observatory has been found in Northwestern Kenya, substantiating ancient Greek travellers' claims that Africans developed the world's first lunar and solar calendars. Moreover, the calendars employed by most nations today are based on the

African model. Solar zodiac, the heart of astrology, was created by the Africans of Kimit.

Education is one of the areas in which Africa's contribution are most profound. The Africans of ancient Kimit built the world's first university. This university, known as the Grand Lodge of Luxor, contained a museum of Science, a library of 400,000 volumes, and a distinguished faculty of priest-professors. At its height, Luxor catered to some 80,000 students.

During antiquity, Egypt served as a university for the Greeks. Most of Greece's finest thinkers went to Egypt for their education. Socrates and other famous Greeks such as Plato, Pythagoras and Hypothrotese all studied in Egypt. Pythagoras, who was credited with developing the Hippocratic



graphic • Derek Marshall

Oath, spent 22 years in Africa studying medicine and later returned to Greece to share his knowledge with his fellow Greeks. What Western scholars call the Pythagorean Theorem was developed centuries before Pythagoras' birth by an African. It was known throughout antiquity as the "Theorem of the Hypotenuse."

Ancient Khart Haddas (Carthage) contained a library housing 500,000 volumes. In 146 B.C. Rome destroyed it when her armies burned the city state to ashes.

The university of Sankore in Timbuctoo, West Africa was one of the finest institutions of the fiftieth and sixtieth centuries. It possessed an outstanding faculty and offered courses in astronomy, mathematics and other disciplines.

The Africans of Kimit were the world's first physicians and were considered the most skilled medical practitioners of antiquity. The world's first known hospital, the Temple of Imhotep, named after the true father of medicine, (an African from Nubia), was built by the African of Kimit.

The surviving medical papyri clearly illustrate the medical knowledge of the African of Kimit. The *Eber Papyrus* which dates back to 1500 BC is a study of pathology, anatomy, herbal pharmacology and physical diagnosis. The *Edwin Smith papyrus*, dating back to 1600 BC, is a surgical text with special emphasis on the spinal column.

Africa's contribution to religion is also overwhelming and many modern religions are believed to be either a direct or indirect outgrowth of African religion. The most important gods of ancient Greece all originated in Africa thought. Also, until recent times, Jesus Christ, Krishna and many of the world's crucified saviours were worshipped as Black men.

The Madonna, or Virgin Mary, of Christianity has historically been worshipped as an African woman. In Kimit's Holy of Holies, there are pictured four scenes representing the annunciation, the immaculate conception, the birth and adoration, all of which later characterized the birth of Christ. What baffles Biblical scholars is that these pictures predate Jesus by over a thousand years. Some Biblical scholars believe that the "Black Madonna" was an outgrowth of the worship of Isis, the goddess of Kimit. At least 400 Black Madonnas are worshipped today in the most sacred shrines and Cathedrals of Europe, Africa, Asia and America.

continued from page 5

ment of Upper Canada prohibits the importation of black slaves into Upper Canada. All children born after the act will become free on reaching the age of 25.

Upper Canada becomes the first British territory to legislate against slavery — however, the act itself does not abolish slavery.

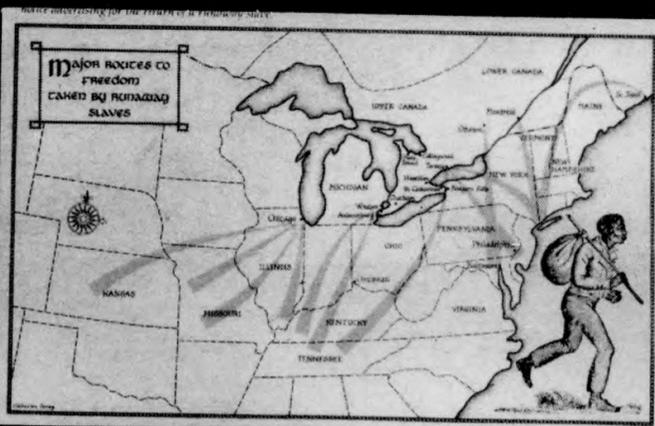
1796

Arrival of the Maroons of Jamaica. The Maroons, who are the descendants of African slaves, have fought the British colonial government in Jamaica since 1655 to maintain their freedom.

In 1796 they lay down their arms on the promise that they will be allowed to remain on the island. On the orders of the governor of Jamaica they are exiled to Nova Scotia. The Maroons found the climate of their new land harsh, the food unpalatable, and the dislike of their neighbours difficult to bear. In 1800 with government assistance the Maroons moved to and settled in Sierra Leone.

1837

Black militia units help quell William Lyon Mackenzie's 1837 rebellion. Josiah Henson, whose name is often associated



with the novel 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' fights on the side of the government in this rebellion and helps capture an enemy American ship which was threatening the town of Sandwich, Ont. Much of the Canadian Black support to Mackenzie was founded on the fear of a union with the United States.

1850

In the United States, the Fugitive Slave Act is passed. It stipulates that even free people can be employed if suspected

of being runaways.

This leads to an increase in black migration northward. Southern Ontario black communities in Windsor, Buxton, Dawn, Chatham and Toronto become larger. In 1860, the black population in Ontario is estimated at 40,000.

1851

Harriet Tubman, the famous woman responsible for freeing about 300 slaves, begins her journey across the border, using the Underground Railroad (URR). She makes 19 journeys, guiding slaves safely to freedom in Canada.

Although there is a considerable argument over the exact number of slaves who reached Canada via the URR, it is estimated that between 1830-1860, 30,000 to 70,000 escaped to Canada West by this process.

1851-1853

Mary Ann Shadd moves to Canada. A committed abolitionist, Shadd advocates that fugitives should flee from slavery to Canada. She becomes the first woman to edit a Canadian newspaper when she owns and edits 'The Provincial Freeman' between 1853 and 1857. Because of her strong concern with education she later becomes a principal of a small school in Windsor during her fight against the ill-structured Black colonization schemes.

# Our benevolent masters...

By Michael Bowe

**I**t is fair to say that both Blacks and whites, in general, are of the opinion that slavery was brutal, inhumane, and savage. However, many American historians who are white and highly respected share the view that slavery was, for the most part, a patriarchal institution that was benevolent and kind within limits. Eugene D. Genovese, Charles Joyner and Ulrich B. Phillips are just a few examples of renowned and acclaimed historians who support this view of slavery.

Genovese, the founding father of the notion that slavery was paternalistic, argues that slaves were dependent on their owners for protection and the necessities of life. While masters depended upon their slaves passivity and willing productivity to preserve their conscience. "Paternalism defined the involuntary labour of the slaves as a legitimate return to their masters for protection and direction."

Genovese insists that slavery, indeed, was a savage system of oppression; however, the master's attempts to dehumanize slaves into things failed as a result of his conscience and slave resistance. Instead, he argues that slaves were incorporated into their owners' families as 'children.'

Charles Joyner, who is a supporter of Genovese's views, asserts that slaves enjoyed many liberties. In his book *Down by the Riverside* Joyner writes: "Increasingly the slaves asserted claims to off times and holidays, in which their masters reluctantly acquiesced." Joyner also argues: "Slaves on the Waccamaw rice plantation who could perform two tasks in a single day were entitled to a full day off the following day."

Just what did slaves do with all this time off? Well, Joyner claims they "prayed and frolicked, hunted (with their own guns) and fished, cooked and cleaned, courted and married... loved and hoped and dreamed."

**Africans who were brought as slaves to the New World did not accept their condition meekly. They employed a variety of methods to express their resentment of the institution of slavery, and of the white masters who enslaved them. They employed quiet, subtle, almost negative methods of protest which today might be termed civil disobedience; for example they pretended to be ill, and so avoided work. On the other hand, they sometimes went to the positive, violent extreme of armed rebellion. Historical studies have established fully the fact that Black anti-slavery attitudes and actions were a strong and persistent feature of the West Indian past."**

Lucille Mathurin  
Rebel Woman



graphic • Dennis Ranstone, African Caribbean Publications

In general, Joyner tries to prove that slaves in the Waccamaw region endured relatively good conditions and treatment from their owners and were allowed room for cultural and self-development.

Joyner quotes as evidence for his claims, a letter written by a rice planter which says "there is no class of people... in this country, or Europe, of the same grade where there is so much happiness, where the wants of nature are so abundantly supplied, where the requirements of labour are as little..."

Ulrich B. Phillips and other pro-slavery historians argue that slavery was a benevolent system. Phillips, who is a fierce defender of slavery, wrote that slavery gave Africans "Christianity and civilization." Moreover, Phillips states that the life of enslaved Africans was fruitful.

Kenneth M. Stamp has examined the views of the above historians and disclaimed them as nonsense, referring to them as mythical and romanticized. In his book *The Peculiar Institution*, Stamp argues that slavery was a ruthless system of exploitation of slave labour for profit.

He presents the records of slave catchers and the brutal Middle Passage where thousands of Africans perished in the landing of 5,000,000 Africans into the United States. He reveals the merciless making of slaves out of Africans, the poor or nonexistent health care, the brutal overseers and "masters," the acts of torture and the slave rebellions.

Stamp refutes claims that the "primitive" physical and mental makeup of Africans justified their enslavement; that slavery was necessary to prepare a "primitive people" to enter the complex civilized and modern society of America; that by the mid-nineteenth century slavery was at the point of extinction since it was becoming uneconomical; that slaves by and large were well-treated, content, did not mind being slaves and were loyal to their "masters;" that for the most part paternalism governed owner-slave relations.

Stanley M. Elkins' view of slavery is even more uncompromising. In strict historical fashion, Elkins insist that American slavery was the most brutal the world has ever known. His historical account depicts the total dehumanization of Africans.

Why the fuss over whether or not slavery was paternalistic, kind and benevolent or a brutal system of economic exploitation and dehumanization? According to historians who argue the former perspective, if it can be proven that people of African descent were indeed allowed the opportunity for cultural and personal development then it logically follows that they are partly to be blamed (if not entirely) for their conditions after slavery.

Those who argue the latter perspective attempt to prove that enslaved women and men were dehumanized and given no room for self-actualization. As a result, their conditions after slavery and up until the present were caused solely by their oppressors.

Modern historical literature has begun to ascribe a new harsh and uncompromising reality to slavery as a result of a new movement of Black intellectuals. Nevertheless, a school of white historians continues to portray slavery as paternalistic, kind and benevolent.

1859

Abraham Shadd becomes a member of the Raleigh, Ont. town council the first black Canadian to be elected to public office.

1861

Outbreak of the American Civil War. About two thirds of the black population in Upper and Lower Canada returns to the United States to fight for the freedom of other blacks. By the end of the century, the black population in Canada has decreased to 17,500.

1900

Tilly Mays is a founding member of the Coloured Women's Club, a benevolent club formed when soldiers return home from the Boer War.

The women of the club work for with the poor, sick and injured in hospitals and soup kitchens. The club is the first women's club in Canada.

1904

Birth of Charles Drew, a black doctor born in the United States and educated at McGill University, who later discovers a process to store blood plasma.

1911

A public outcry against increased black migration to the Canadian West results in the passage of Canada's first official restrictive immigration laws.

1919

Railway companies hire many black men from the United States and the Caribbean as porters.

A community of blacks develops in Montreal because the city is the headquarters of Canadian Pacific Railways and the regional eastern centre of CN Railways.

1922-23

In the United States, Jamaican Marcus Garvey begins a world movement that advocates throughout the Americas the development of black pride and the appreciation of African heritage.

In Canada, the movement leads to the formation of chapters of the world-wide Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which is today called the Universal African Improvement Association (UAlA). These organizations flourish with the movement of blacks from rural areas to cities like Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

1940  
Pearleen Oliver, a community activist born and raised in Guysborough County, N.S., leads in the 1940's the fight for the first black nurse in Nova Scotia.

1955-65

The third wave of migration from the Caribbean begins. Because job requirements are oriented towards domestic labour, the majority of these migrants are women.

Many highly qualified women enter Canada during this time, seeing it as the only available legal route to achieve social mobility overseas. A large proportion of these black women were able to take advantage of opportunities for further education.

During this period, a total of 2,690 women came from the Caribbean to Canada under the Household Service Workers scheme. In order to increase their chances for acceptance, some don't declare that they left children in their home countries since the fact would be viewed negatively by immigration authorities.

1964

The Separate School Act is amended, leading to the removal

- James W. St. G. Walker  
22. *The Freedom Seekers*  
Dr. Dan Hill
23. *Africville: The Life and Death of a Canadian Black Community*  
Donald H. Clairmont and Dennis William Magill
24. *Silenced: Talks with Working Class Caribbean Women about Their Lives and Struggles as Domestic Workers in Canada*  
Makeda Silveira
25. *Black Protest: History, Document and Analyses - 1619 to the Present*  
edited with introduction and commentary by Joanne Grant
26. *Apartheid: South African Naziism*  
Sipo E. Mzimela
27. *Resistance Literature*  
Barbara Harlow
28. *Towards an Aesthetic of Opposition: Essays in Literature, Criticism and Cultural Imperialism*  
Arun Mukherjee
29. *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*  
Ali A. Mazrui
30. *Racism and Psychiatry*  
Alexander Thomas M.D. and Samuel Sillen, Ph.D.
31. *Blues People (Jazz History)*  
LeRoi Jones
32. *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music (Jazz History)*  
Frank Kofsky
33. *The Struggle is My Life*  
Nelson Mandela
34. *Capitalism and Slavery*  
Dr. Eric Williams
35. *From Columbus to Castro*  
Dr. Eric Williams
36. *Slavery and Social Death*  
Orlando Patterson
37. *Angela Davis Autobiography*
38. *Women, Race and Class*  
Angela Davis
39. *Women, Culture and Politics*  
Angela Davis
40. *Talking Back*  
Bell Hooks
41. *Black Is The Color Of My TV Tube*  
Gil Noble
42. *Black Women Writers: A Critical Evaluation*  
Edited by Mari Evans
43. *Black Robes White Justice*  
Bruce Wright
44. *V. S. Naipaul: A Materialist Analysis*  
Selwyn Cudjoe

# Triumph of the Zulus



Zulu warrior with knobbed staff

By Pete Sundiata

"We are in a state of war."

These words, frequently repeated by Public Enemy member Sister Souljah, are meant to convey the idea that our people need to understand our current situation in terms of the flow of history, that the war white invaders waged upon our people in Africa was a war that continues to this day.

Strong stuff. Not everyone would describe the state we find ourselves in as one of war. Repression, yes. Oppression, yes. But War? In fact, not everyone would agree that the state of relations between Africans and Europeans was ever one of war. War is comprised of armies and generals, battle plans and strategies — sophisticated stuff, something not perceived as being African. If Africans fought at all, this view goes, they fought haphazardly, with people running everywhere, hooping and hollering.

The truth is quite different. While our African armies eventually lost to European ones, the reason is primarily that Europeans developed advanced weaponry at a far faster rate than did we. The strategy, execution, and bravery of our forces were never found wanting. Indeed, these qualities were what held the invaders at bay.

It was less than eleven decades ago that the Zulu army won a decisive battle over British forces. Despite eventually losing the war, the courage and discipline shown by the Zulus in achieving this victory should be held up as an example of African determination and strength against formidable opposition. It would do us well to recall this battle now.

The Zulus had been living peaceably with the neighbouring British colony in Natal (both are part of what is now South Africa), but a small cadre of British officers could not bear the thought of a strong, confident, African nation looming right next door. A disinformation scheme (yes, they had them back then) was launched with the home office in London, exaggerating any points of friction and hostility between the two. Before long the war was on.

Around January 20, 1879, an army of British soldiers and African stooges invaded "Zululand," as it was called by the British. They were in search of the Zulu army and stood ready and eager for their first fight. They soon got it.

On January 22 the Zulu army attacked at a place called Isandlwana. It was a bloody battle. The end of the conflict saw men with assegais (spears) pitted against those with bayonets. While both sides suffered heavy losses, the British went down in the

most devastating defeat they had ever felt in their colonial wars. Fifty-two British officers, about 500 African stooges, and 806 British soldiers were killed in the battle. More British officers were killed in this one battle than were killed in all the fighting at Waterloo.

The Zulus, too, suffered heavily, losing over three thousand men to the superior firepower of the British. The main reason the numbers weren't higher was due to the strategic planning and organization of the Zulus. They attacked using their time-tested "buffalo's horn" method. In a disciplined manner, they sent out two "horns" from the sides of their forces, with the aim of encircling the opposition, and emerged victorious.

The British forces, on the other hand, were overconfident, planned their attack poorly and fell prey to their own sense of

**"Africa my Africa....  
I have never known you  
But my face is full of your blood."**

David Diop

self-importance. In one unbelievable instance, regular soldiers could not get ammunition from their supply officer as he insisted on maintaining bureaucratic order and even went so far as to have the men line up for supplies. This was done even as the Zulus were closing in.

The defeat of the British in this battle sent shock waves all the way to the throne in England. They simply did not think such a thing possible. They tried to explain it away by saying the Zulus had no fear of death, and would simply hurl themselves like a great black mass against any opposition. With so many dead, the British no longer took the Zulus for granted.

The battle of Isandlwana recalls one bright spot in our wars with the Europeans. The wars have ended, at least in the conventional sense of armies and generals. But is the fight for freedom and equality not really just an extension of the war the Zulus fought, a fight against white domination?

Certainly the rules of the game have changed. There are no military positions, battle plans or the like, but are we not still subject to racial discrimination and military abuse in the form of the police, and disinformation?

Perhaps the war Sister Souljah speaks of is an undeclared one. If so, it would do us well learn from the Zulu warriors the benefits of discipline, courage, and strategy. An undeclared war is not fought with assegais and bayonets. It is fought with intelligence and bravery.

**CAUTION!!**  
**COLORED PEOPLE**  
**OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,**  
You are hereby respectfully **CAUTIONED** and advised, to avoid conversing with the **Watchmen and Police Officers of Boston,**  
And they have already been actually employed in **KIDNAPPING, GARBING, AND KEEPING SLAVES.** Therefore, if you value your **LIBERTY,** and the **Welfare of the Fugitives** among you, **Shun them in every possible manner, as so many *SHUNNERS*** on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.  
**Keep a Sharp Look Out for KIDNAPPERS, and have TOP EYE open.**  
APRIL 24, 1861.

Posters like this warned slaves in the 'free' states of their danger, and many fled to Canada.

*(continued from page 8)*  
from existing legislations of all references about separate schools for blacks.

As a Liberal MPP in the Ontario legislature, Leonard Braithwaite, in the first black elected to a provincial parliament in 1963. He is instrumental in the introduction of the amending act. The last segregated school closed its doors in 1965 in Essex County, Ont.

1968  
Lincoln Alexander of Hamilton, Ont., becomes the first black member of the House of Commons.

Roosevelt Douglas, a black student activist, organizes student protest at St. George's University in New Brunswick because of the racism experienced by black students.

1969  
Representatives of black organizations and institutions meet in Toronto to establish the National Black Coalition of Canada, the first such national black organization in the country.

1972  
Rosalind Brown becomes the first black woman to sit in a Canadian legislature when she is elected as the NDP MP for

Vancouver-Burrard. In 1970 she was the first on-bus woman for the status of women and once introduced a bill to establish collective bargaining rights for tenants and supported rent control.

1973  
A general amnesty is granted to all non-status immigrants in Canada.

1975  
1,500 Haitians are deported when Canadian authorities don't accept their argument for seeking refugee status under the Refugee Status Act.

1979  
Marianne Green, a founding member of the Black Education Project in Toronto, encourages radical changes in the thinking and policy making of Toronto educators.

Before the work of Green and other Black activists, there were no race relation departments, heritage programs or mechanisms to deal with racism in the school system.

1979  
Lincoln Alexander, Liberal MP for Hamilton West, becomes

the first black federal cabinet member as Minister of Labour under the Trudeau government.

*Although few American slaves were branded, none had personal or legal rights that an owner was bound to respect.*



1983 to present  
Increasingly more Black men and women are now in prominent positions in social and political organizations.

- For example:
- Jean Augustine
  - Stephanie Pane, Education Trustee for the City of North York
  - Zanana Akande, First Black Woman MP for Ontario
  - Alvin Curling, Liberal Politician
  - Anne Cools, First Black Woman appointed to Canadian senate
  - Ben Johnson, Premier sprinter for Canadian track team, 1988 Olympics
  - Lennox Lewis, Gold medalist Olympic boxing champion, 1984
  - Oscar Peterson, World renowned Jazz pianist and Chancelor for York University

Also within the last decade, there has been an elevation of consciousness within the black community. Much of this awareness stems from continued discrimination within Canada's social and political infrastructure. For example, the police on Black shooting, which claimed the lives of Wade Lawson, and Lester Donaldson, has united many Canadian black organizations in the fight against racism on Canadian police forces.

# relating

"In blackness there is great virtue if you will but observe its beauty."

Antar

## Positivity for the '90s

by Jacen Brathwaite

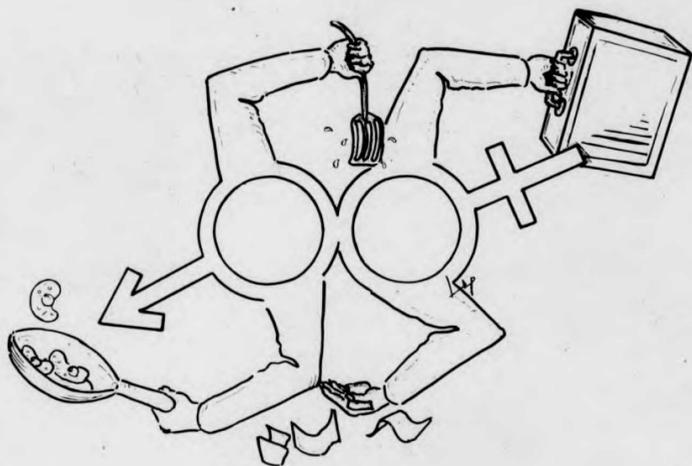
Here we are folks, Black History Month. The one month a year devoted to Black people and their contributions to history.

In full spirit, I have decided to make my contribution to present day history. Before I start, however, I warn all those reading that this article is written for Black people. That is to say, you won't find any universals in this article. It is biased and I'm admitting it before it's said. Granted, the advice can be used by anyone, but brothers and sisters, I'm talking to you.

Now that my disclaimer is out of the way and I've hopefully lost all readers who aren't sure what colour they are, let me get down to business.

First of all, I would like you to consider these phrases: "I don't know! Go ask your mother!" or "Wait 'til your father gets home!" These are the phrases of the past, and don't fool yourself, of the present as well. These phrases suggest that both the man and the woman have their respective jobs in the home and the community.

How many sisters reading this have heard that they should know how to cook? That is an example of gender roles. As a woman, you are expected to know how to cook, clean, raise children and manage the household. Now I'm not speaking for all, I'm sure, but personally I wouldn't be too excited about this as my future in this world. All you have to do is be born a



graphic • Leo Campbell

woman and all these jobs are yours! Congratulations, ladies! It sucks doesn't it?

Don't think I forgot you guys. You've got your jobs too. First of all, you have to know how to fix everything. In addition to that, you have to do all the heavy yard work. Yeah, you know what I'm sayin'. Those hot days when you're outside cutting the grass and you're sister is inside the house... washing the dishes. Or what about when you're outside freezing so the

driveway is free of snow when dad gets home?

You get the point. But by now you're probably wondering why I'm spreading all this negativity. "But we know all that shit. Why you want to trip on us like that?" All right. Let me get to the point of the article.

Let me begin by saying that I love my people and I believe in them and what they can do. And in discussing gender roles, I can't help but believe that this is one of our

ways to being equal to "the man."

Let me explain. Personally, I think white women are fighting a losing battle in the quest for equality with their men. As far as I'm concerned, white dudes ain't ready for a woman who is doing the same thing as them. However, I don't want to make this into an exposition on women's liberation so let me continue on my chosen path.

Erase the gender roles! There. That's my Big Statement.

Now the first benefit of this would be the fact that the youth can become more self sufficient. We are moving towards the age of the single parent family. Why not have a father who does more for his children than discipline them? By reducing the roles of males and females to the strictly biological ones, we are eliminating the proverbial weak link in the chain. Imagine a people where everyone can do for themselves, instead of having to depend on others for help. If we grow up living like this, it will encourage us to do for ourselves as well.

Not only will we become more independent, but for those of us who grew up in the world of the gender roles, it will promote the utmost respect for the opposite sex. We will begin to realize just how hard the job that the other is doing really is. We will also begin to appreciate women, guys. Like it or not, women go through a lot and to be in a woman's shoes is a tight fit for a long walk.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the mixing of gender roles

will enhance the race. The white man might keep us out of the top of his institutions, but he's the ultimate loser. He keeps dealing with white people so he's going to get the same perspective every time--W.A.S.P. The sister or brother that he doesn't want in his school might have the cure for A.I.D.S! Using that same logic, apply it to yourselves. If you keep somebody out of your scene, that scene ain't gonna change. I guess what I'm saying is that you need more than one side of the story to finish the book, so ladies, fix that .t.v., and guys cook dinner while you're wife kicks back to watch the Superbowl!

What we need to aim for is a society where the gender roles are no longer gender roles. When a man stays home to cook, don't say he's doing woman's work. As long as you call it that, you haven't learned.

You've got to work towards a stronger society than what we've already got. Don't think that if you've got what a white man has, you've got power. Work towards your own ends. His world is crumbling, so it's obvious that it doesn't work the way he sees it.

To model our culture after a failure is a failure in itself. We've got the chance to take the initiative on these ideas to strengthen ourselves as a whole, not just pockets of success here and there. This is our chance to create a new direction in our history. You want positivity? Well here's a phrase that's new for '92. Live Black, Live Strong, Live EQUAL, and Live Long.

# Choices

by Roxane Brown

Within the last two months, I have witnessed two friends struggle with the issue of abortion. Each handled her situation differently, yet each experience raised the question of abortion morals, consequences and social reactions.

At 18 years old "Jean," became pregnant by counting her "safe" days after ovulation, to have sex unprotected. Terrified of the reaction of her family and friends, Jean avoided the issue until the fourth month of her pregnancy.

Due to the high risk of an abortion at such a late stage, Jean was required to go into the hospital one day prior to, and stay one day after the abortion (this involved hiding and lying to a lot of people)

Needless to say, abortion was not a "simple" process for Jean at all.

"Alana's" situation is somewhat different. At 19, and a fulltime university student, she had always said if she got pregnant, she would have an abortion rather than jeopardize her education, and suffer the beatdown from her mother.

Alana realized after her period was one week and a half late, that she must be pregnant. One week later, she had an appointment for an abortion. Four days after that, Alana, along with her man, spent 4

hours in a clinic, and was released.

Alana was back to her regular routine by the next day, never missed school, and said she has never looked back.

Guilt, is a part of it, she admits, "but I know realistically that I could never be a mother now, I'm pursuing my educational goals, and I don't have time to cry and grieve all day, I did the best thing for everyone involved, believe me."

I find it almost inconceivable, that in the 90's unplanned pregnancy is such a prominent issue. Especially considering the amount of FREE birth control counselling and availability of contraceptives for youth today. I cannot conceive of people not taking advantage of one of the last "free" offers. The consequences of abortion are lesser for younger girls; however like any operation, there are risks of internal bleeding, tissue remaining in the uterus, P.I.D., pelvic, inflammation, disease, infection, and risks of future attempts at pregnancy. I am not saying abortion is right or wrong, I think there is a case for each side. I have simply realized the relevance of the issue due to my friends' experiences and cannot find a reasonable excuse for this unfortunate, risky and prominent occurrence in 1992.



graphic • Rosanne Bailey

# RESPECT DUE

Only the BLACK WOMAN can say "when and where I enter, in the quiet undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole...race enters with me."

Anna Julia Cooper, 1982



By Althea Knibb

**B**lack women and more specifically Black mothers, have been looked upon over years with respect and admiration. Their hard work, commitment to their children and resilience have been celebrated and glorified. Whether single mothers, working mothers or housewives, these strong women are responsible for childbearing, nurturing, nursing, counselling, educating, comforting, disciplining and preparing us for life.

Manning Marable, professor of political science at the University of Colorado, gives credit to his mother for the development of his manhood and self-discovery, "From my mother I learned the value of spiritual strength and blessing of caring for others and gained a passion for scholarship and writing. I learned in this secure environment that life is rational and predictable, knowledge is power and any problems can be overcome by analysis and hard work."

Black women's experiences have produced a set of values and perceptions that challenge stereotypes. They understand the oppression of sexual discrimination and the importance of making connections between the dynamics of race and gender.

As a result of the struggles some women (especially single mothers) encountered in giving us a good home, not all of us grew up feeling loved. Whether we realize it or not there are many reasons for our mothers behavior. For some there might have been times when our mother's love was not in her eyes, her voice or her touch; and at times it almost seemed she feared intimacy and tenderness. This may be hard to understand. But trying to understand her struggle — what depressed and silenced her, and why she seemed so distant — will free us from personalizing her behaviour.

Whatever our mothers gave us it was their best, based on their own level of personal develop-

ment and happiness.

From my own experience, the nexus of beauty, warmth and strength within Black women has taught me to redefine my understanding of power and social change. Black women are the mothers of civilization, and indeed they are the strength of our culture. During Black History Month we should all take the time to honour our mothers, the foundation of the Black family.

"My mother has exemplified our culture's strength and beauty. She has taught me and encouraged self respect, which has proven to be a characteristic that is necessary in

life, in order to love one another and push on through life's let downs."

-Carol 23

"My mother has continued to amaze me with her quiet but accurate direction though out my life. It seems that she knows her children all so well and could simply and calmly lend a word of encouragement or note of advice, almost always correct. I really could say that no one knows me better than my mother. I have carried that confidence with me through my life and she has redefined what the Black woman means to me and our culture."

-Trevor 23

"My Mommy gives the best hugs, better than a teddy bear. No one beats my Mommy's hugs and smiles."

-Stephanie 4

"Through the most difficult times in my life, my mother has always encouraged me and taught me to laugh. I think that is the most valuable thing that my mother has taught me. There are times in life where you have to cry, equally when you have to laugh."

Michelle 16

"After my father left when I was 13, my mother provided me with what I need in life. She has

been both my mother and father. It is because of her that I give credit to single mothers, because there are many of us who could not do the same as they do and keep our sanity. My mother has showed how to be strong and how to love. I think that in this culture, this is a common characteristic, that needs to be exercised a little more in order for our race to get closer to one another and understand what makes us tick."

-Dwayne 21

"Sometimes children as old as me sit around and complain about those foolish things our mothers used to do, say to us and make us do, but when you look back, it was done in our best interest. My mother has taught me how to discipline my own children. Although we complain, discipline is necessary in our race because we have to work harder in this society, than any other. Discipline and hard work is necessary when you're born into this race. Young people must always remember that"

-Yvonne 43.

"Believe it or not, my mother has taught me that all Black women are not feisty or rude. I have watched my mother and her encounters with people, over the years and questioned things that she has done. She has been brought up the same as many Black daughters have, having self-respect and not making yourself vulnerable to anyone, especially men. I have found that there is nothing personal toward Black men, it is just a way of protecting ourselves. I have learned to appreciate this quality in Black women because they are firm and stand their ground. The best girlfriend or wife, is one who you can trust. If these women were easier to approach and pick up, imagine who could take her from under your nose."

-Ian 24.

# Who said Jesus was white?

by Richard Kildare

**A**s I look around, I am pleased to see a good number of Black youths trying to regain their history, becoming political, taking stands on issues, and doing various sorts of things to build themselves a better future. However, I do not believe that many of them are aware of the most destructive force in their struggle. This destructive force is the Westernized conception of Christianity.

I say this because of the large number of Black Christians that exist today. Many of them feel that the image of Jesus they have in their churches, in their homes, and in their cars is pretty much what Jesus resembled. This is not so.

Many Christians do not realize that the image they now see is actually Michelangelo's uncle. Michelangelo used his own uncle as a model as he painted this picture in the sixteenth century for pope Julius the sixth. The immediate answer from many Christians is that it does not matter what color or image Jesus is represented as; the essence of Christianity is in its message. But I would reply that it does make a difference.

After many Black children are born they are taught that there is a God, and that God had a son named Jesus, who was blond and blue-eyed. This builds an inferiority complex in the Black child. Somewhere in the child's development, he or she is going to say 'if Jesus is blond and blue-eyed, maybe blond blue-eyed people are better.' On the other hand, the white child will say 'maybe I am better.' These assertions do not have to be consciously realized — they can be sub-consciously held.

My solution is to tell children that this picture was painted by a gifted artist and is not necessarily the image of Jesus. It is crucial to do this because I am now 22 years of age and have just found this out. I thought at different stages in my life that Jesus was that blond, blue-eyed guy on the wall.

To add to my point, I grew up in a small town in Jamaica where there was not one white person. But every Sunday many of us would willingly go and worship under the blue-eyed Jesus. And I am convinced that this is happening in many places in the



graphic • Leo Campbell

Caribbean. My argument is that worship under this image develops a severe inferiority complex in Blacks.

Children of all colours must know that this is not necessarily Jesus. We must remember they

are not critical thinkers. They must know important facts like this before the age of 22. When I found this out at age 22, all I felt was anger, as I was being lied to all my life, not only I but millions of brothers and sisters.

## Defining Blackness? Don't bother

by Dwayne Morgan

One of the greatest obstacles hindering the progress of the Black community is the struggle against racism. This barrier of discrimination and oppression still flourishes — both in our motherland Africa and, sadly, in this multicultural "democracy" we call Canada.

The struggle against prejudiced institutions and oppressive governments requires unity if our goal of equality is ever to be achieved. This is why internal divisions within the Black community are so damaging to our interests.

It is vital that the Black community recognize that our race consists of many cultural backgrounds. Black is not a particular shade or culture, it is a race — a race that carries a long history of courage and pride.

We only harm ourselves when we insist on measuring our Blackness on an imaginary colour chart and create inequalities among ourselves that are akin to the racist tendencies we face in our daily lives. It is these racist distinctions and discriminatory actions which have been detrimental to us in the past and continue to hinder us in the present. We do ourselves a disservice when we sink to this level of ignorance.

Illusions of 'defining our Blackness' are just that — illusions.

Ironically, some wish to create an image of Blackness that illuminates stereotypes and places artificial limitations on our character.

Black is not an attitude or a product of a particular environment. Our personality, our character, our being is the product of many environments and vast experience. We are doctors and lawyers, teachers and professors, actors and truck drivers. We speak many different languages and have numerous interests. We cannot be defined or explained. We are a much too complex people with an intricate past.

Recognizing the full scope of our heritage is necessary for unity. We must realize that African culture is the foundation on which Caribbean cultures and other cultures were built. The cultural development of our ancestors should be viewed as a testimony of the resilience of our people. It is a grave error to exclude the contributions of Caribbean Blacks and indeed all Blacks because some of our ancestors were stolen from their homeland. We must view this action as an atrocity against our race; one that divides us in body but not in spirit.

Although our roots are African the fruits of our ancestry can be seen all over the world. They are seen in the defiance of Nelson Mandela, the valiance of Marcus Garvey and in every struggle, dream and step of

To add to this, there are thousands of Black Christians in South Africa worshipping under Michelangelo's uncle. My friends, this is captivity.

There is something else many Christians are not aware of. From the sixth century Babylonian Talmud, here is a quote:

"Canaan's children shall be born ugly and black. Moreover, because you twisted your head round to see my nakedness, your grandchildren's hair shall be twisted, and their eyes red. Again, because your eyes jested at my misfortune, theirs shall swell; and because you neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked, and their male members shall be shamefully elongated.... Men of this race are called negroes."

One of the problems with this is that there were no negroes in the sixth century: the term was developed by the Portuguese at the dawn of the slave trade in the sixteenth century. In other words, this was inserted by racists.

This was the stuff that John Calvin used to support his doctrine of the inferiority of Blacks. But before there was a John Calvin or a Roman Church, the Church was already established in North Africa.

Ethiopia was a Christian nation 124 years before Rome.

Rome only became a Christian nation after Constantine became emperor. There were seven patriarches in North Africa and twenty-four bishops before there was a pope in Rome.

There are countless other facts that I believe are not realized by many Christians. St. Augustine, one of the fathers of the Christian church, was an African. The first recorded martyrs of Christendom were three African women. Ninety per cent of Genesis and Exodus takes place in Africa. Moses was an African. The slave trade was started by a Christian reverend and by Pope Martin the fifth after 4000.

If Christianity is continued to be censored in this way, then we get doctrines like those of the Mormons. Up until 1978, Mormons preached that Blacks cannot go to heaven. This is not all that long ago. Even today, in 1992, there is a church called 'Jesus Christ Christian Aryans' in Canada.

I feel that if we teach children the truth — or what we believe to be the truth — we do everyone a favor. Because when you find out that someone has been lying to you, the first tendency is to scorn that person, and as a result we have distrust and hate. In other words we are building on a weak foundation, something Jesus preached against.

Malcolm and Martin.

We share a common bond: our hardships, our struggles, our Blackness.

We are brothers and sisters.

discrimination, it will be as a result of our Blackness; not our experience, background or interests.

We are the children of a long line of brave men and women who broke

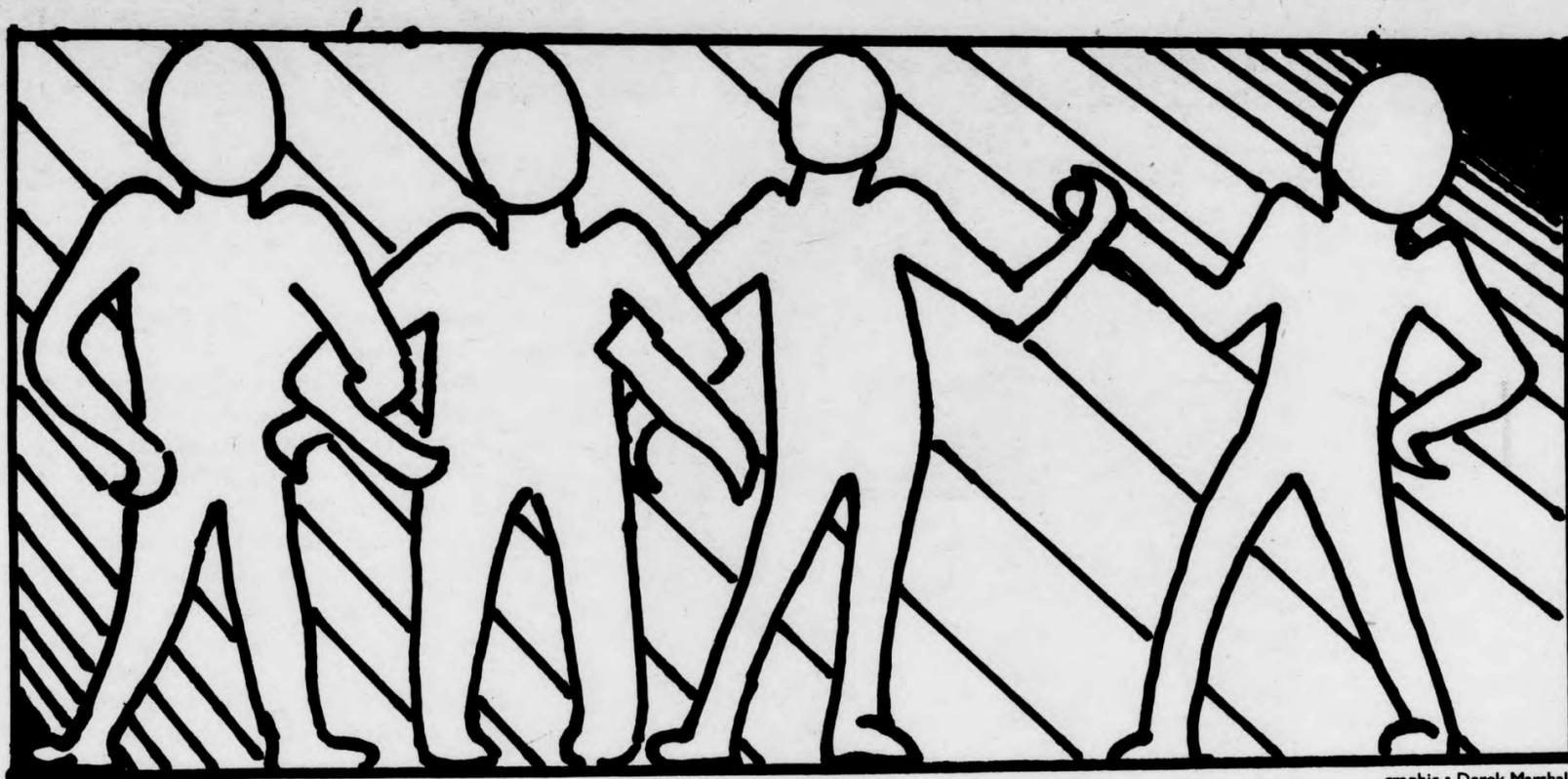
**"The young are the community's sacred — and only — hope, and it is the responsibility of the elders to guide and protect and raise the young — which means, also, and above all, assuming the authority to correct the young. The young do not remain young long. If they find no connection during the brief and brilliant moment of their youth, they will have great trouble finding it thereafter, if, indeed, they ever manage to find it at all."**

James Baldwin  
Evidence of Things Not Seen

graphic • Rosanne Bailey

When we face a racist individual or a prejudiced institution, we are Black before we are Haitian or Jamaican or African. If we are to face racial

the bonds of slavery and forged a path for us to take. It is now up to us to break the chains of mental slavery, unite and take our place.



graphic • Derek Marshall

# “Hey Courtnay, how ya doin’?” “I’m a Black Gay man living in a white man’s world, how the hell do you think I’m doin’?”

Last November the York Caribbean Students Association held a forum at which several members of the Caribbean community spoke about their experiences of being homosexual.

The following is a transcript of a reading by Courtnay McFarlane, a member of our community.

by Courtnay McFarlane

When I agreed to speak at this forum, I did so with reluctance and a certain amount of fear. Speaking publicly about this issue and identifying oneself as a homosexual is difficult and in some environments, dangerous. But despite the difficulty I came because I believe my voice and visibility is empowering.

Speaking out as a Black man and as a Gay man is a challenge to the systems, structures and people that contribute to my oppression. I am a Black Gay man or a Gay man of African descent (pick any term). My Gayness is as intrinsic a part of my identity as my maleness, or my Blackness. My sexuality, gender and race are some of my identity, they are not by any means the sum total of who I am.

I, or rather we all have a multiplicity of identities making us unique individuals.

I am oppressed in this society as a Black man, and as a Gay man, but being Black and Gay is not double oppression.

The cause of my oppression as a Black man is not my race but racism — white supremacy. The cause of my oppression as a Gay man is not my sexual identity. The cause of my oppression is

heterosexuality and homophobia.

The distinction may be nebulous to some. But for me it is quite clear. For hundreds of years we, as Black people, have been given the message by those who oppress us that we are to some degree responsible and deserving of the racism we experience. There is nothing inherent to our native behaviour that justifies or causes racism. White supremacy causes racist oppression.

I have been taught to believe that my sexuality is somehow evil, abnormal, wrong and unnatural; that it is the reason I am oppressed as a Gay man. The responsibility has been shifted from the oppressor to the oppressed. If I had continued to internalize these notions, question my nature and my right to freedom of sexual expression, I would not recognize the true source of the oppression (heterosexism/homophobia) and would offer no challenge to the power structure that oppresses me.

Often we cannot come to the Black community as Black Gays and Lesbians, with all our identities. We are required and pres-

sured by the heterosexist, homophobic, patriarchal powers that be to choose to divide our identities. Choose race or sexuality.

If we choose race we remain closeted. If we choose sexuality we choose ostracism and isolation. Either way we remain silent and invisible — status quo maintained and oppression continues.

Women in our community have also been required to divide themselves in the name of Black liberation. They have been asked to leave their gender politics at the door and turn a blind eye to sexist oppression in the community. The front to work on is race, they are told.

As Blacks in a white supremacist society, we are tolerated, even accepted if we do not challenge racism and play down race politics. In short, we should check our race

want to participate, leave these issues elsewhere and remain silent.

I do not believe that we can work toward true liberation as a people if we continue to fight between ourselves as to who has the right to more freedom—men or women heterosexuals or homosexuals. We cannot challenge the white supremacist structure of this society if we are not united, if we do not see each others struggles as part of our own. We cannot effectively challenge racist oppression if we are ourselves participants in a system of oppression.

Black men must acknowledge the fact that sexism empowers us, despite the impact of racism on our lives. Heterosexuals must acknowledge that heterosexism

empowers them despite the impact of racism on their lives. Though we continue to be oppressed we must also recognize the ways in which we perpetuate

the oppression of other members of our community.

The power that we claim as men or heterosexuals, is often done at the expense of Black women, Black Lesbians, Gays, or Bisexuals—also members of our community.

The power that we take from each other is in the end, power that we take from ourselves. Our struggle should not be a horizontal one where we fight among ourselves for the largest piece of a small pie. It should be

a vertical one where we demand more pies for ourselves, our community to share.

The common problems we face as Blacks are too immense, and our common resources too scarce for us to continue to exclude each other on the basis of sexual preferences. Homophobia and the continual ignorance to and participation in the oppression of Black Gays and Lesbian cripples the resources of our community.

It requires tremendous energy to hate and exclude one another—as opposed to using our energy for the empowerment of the African community.

We can, and do, as Black Lesbians and Gays contribute socially, culturally and politically to the community. The homophobia and heterosexism that still exists in the Black community has forced us to be invisible participants. The homophobia and heterosexism that still exists in the Black community has pushed some of us away from what should be our home place — and we take with us our talents, energies and sometimes identification.

We can be Black Lesbians and Gays and be committed to Blackness and the liberation of our people no matter what gender we love. But our commitment will no longer be made at the expense of our identity as Black Lesbians and Gays. For the power that we take from each other is the power that we take from ourselves and our struggle should not be with each other but with white supremacy.

Courtnay McFarlane OCA Student and Member of AYANGA (An organization for Gay Black Men in Toronto)

*“We cannot effectively challenge racist oppression if we are ourselves participants in a system of oppression.”*

identification at the door to be allowed in.

The belief is that we can only challenge one form of oppression at a time and that there are no parallels between various forms of oppression. The time is now to work against racism, sexism and maybe later, much, much later, sexuality.

Those who have the power — white, heterosexist, males (and in our community Black/heterosexist males)—prioritize our issues. Those of us with different identities and issues of oppression must, if we

# Loving safely

by Dionne Faulkner

AIDS. HIV. HIV Disease. What comes to mind when you hear these words? Gay? White? Magic Johnson? It won't happen to me?

I'm sure for many of us these and other thoughts pop into our minds. But what about protecting ourselves from contracting the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or transmitting HIV to someone else if we are positive? What about supporting and caring for our sisters and brothers who are HIV-positive? Do these thoughts pop into your mind?

As we celebrate African History Month this year, it is important and necessary for us to think about HIV Disease, or AIDS, as it is commonly referred to. It is important for us, as Black people, as African people, to think about how this disease is impacting on our lives and our communities, both here in Canada and around the world. We need to know the correct information about HIV so we can then take that information and turn it into responsible and safer actions.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is *not* the same as having Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). One can have HIV (be 'HIV-positive') and not have AIDS. Let me explain. First of all, to find out if you are HIV positive, you must have an HIV antibody blood test done. This is not a regular blood test. It is one that specifically looks for HIV antibodies in your blood and you can have it done without using your name at various locations throughout Metro Toronto. (See end of article).

This test is the only way for you to know if you have the virus. You

cannot tell if someone has AIDS by looking at them.

When some has HIV Disease (AIDS), that means that their immune system (the system in the body that fights infections like a cold or the flu) has been compromised. The person has an opportunistic infection (an infection that takes advantage of a weakened immune system) that their body cannot fight off.

Someone who has HIV might not show any symptoms and could be quite healthy. Some of the symptoms which might show up include persistent fatigue, rapid weight loss, persistent cough, nausea and recurring diarrhea.

In women, however, the symptoms can be different. They include vaginal yeast infections which keep coming back and are difficult to treat, irregular periods and Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID).

I'm not saying that if you have any of these symptoms, you have HIV. What I am trying to tell you is that if you notice any of these, you should get more information by talking to your doctor, by calling us at **Black Cap (926-0122)**, or by calling an AIDS information line. Don't panic. Your symptoms could be the result of another infection so get it checked out.

HIV transmission is quite particular so you cannot contract HIV from casual contact such as shaking hands, sharing cups, forks, spoons, or having someone cough or sneeze on you.

There are four possible ways that have been determined for HIV transmission: through unprotected, unsafe sex; through the sharing of needles; through blood transfusion (but in Canada blood has been routinely screened since 1985); and in

the womb from an HIV positive woman to the child (there is only a 13-33 percent chance of this happening).

As African people, it is not enough for us to have the correct information about HIV Disease. We, my sisters and brothers, must take that information and apply it in practical terms to our lives.

We must insist to our sexual partners that we practice safer sex at all times, including talking about sex — what we like or don't like — and making sure that *condoms are used every time*. This doesn't mean "sometimes" or "only when you have been seeing someone for a short amount of time." To make sure we don't become infected or pass HIV to someone else, we have to (it is a must!) *practice safer sex always*. If you are unsure about what is or is not safe, call us at **Black CAP** and we'll be glad to help you.

Safer sex is one way of preventing transmission of HIV but we must also practice safer needle use by not sharing our "works" or needles when we inject drugs, including steroids or when we do piercing or tattooing. If you use needles, you can exchange the dirty ones for clean ones at needle exchanges throughout the city (see end of article). If you can't exchange, then clean your needles with bleach and water.

Right now, there is no cure for HIV Disease. There are, however, means of prevention and treatment for the sisters and brothers who are HIV positive.

As a community, sistren and brethren, we must take care of our own by supporting those who are HIV-positive and not denying their existence or their lives. We must affirm each other and break the silence about HIV Disease in the Black community. There are Black people who have died from HIV Disease in Toronto.

We, as a community, come from all walks of life. Some of us were born here in Canada and others were born in the Caribbean, in Africa, in South America and in other places around the world. Some of us are gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual. We speak various languages and are differently abled. With all these differences, we are still one people — Black people — African people.

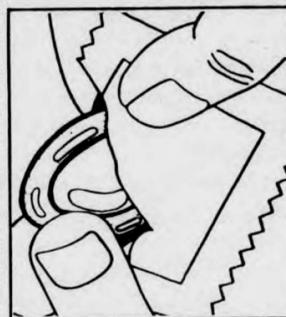
Remember, when it comes to HIV Disease, it's not how you identify that puts you at risk but rather what you do and how safely you do it. All Black people's lives are important. As our motto at **Black CAP** points out: "Together we are linked in life and death through unity, strength and hope."

Dionne Faulkner is the Support and Outreach Coordinator with The Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention.

## MAKE THEM WORK FOR YOU.

• First — always buy condoms made of latex. Rubbers made from lambskin membrane break more easily.

• Men who haven't used rubbers before can practise while jerking off before trying one in a sexual encounter with someone else. And don't give up after one try — they take a little getting used to, but it's well worth the effort.

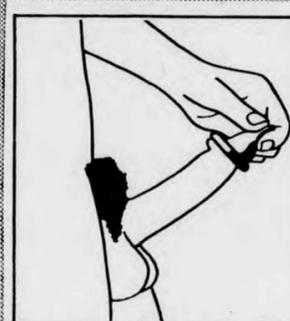


### 1. Open carefully.

Rough tearing or long fingernails can damage the condom.

### 2. Get the lube.

Make sure it's water-based (like K-Y, Lubafax, ForPlay or Muco). Don't put any on the cock — but put a drop just in the tip of the condom. This increases sensation without letting the rubber slip off.



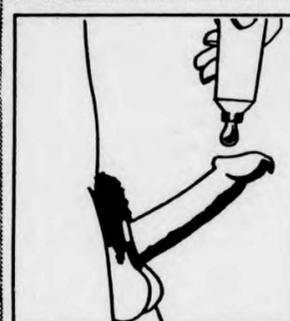
### 3. Place and pinch.

Put the rubber at the end of the unlubricated cock (if uncircumcised, pull back the foreskin first) and pinch out the air in the receptacle tip. This leaves a space to catch the cum. (If the condom doesn't have a receptacle tip, leave a half-inch free at the end — and make sure there's no air in it.)



### 4. Roll it on.

Unroll the rubber right down to the base of the cock. Smooth out any air bubbles as you do — air trapped inside a condom could make it break.



### 5. Lubricate.

Use lots of lube — the more slippery the rubber, the less likely it is to break or come off during sex.

Again — make sure it's water-based lube. Oil-based lubricants like Vaseline or mineral oil are out — they weaken latex and could make the condom break.



### 6. Afterwards...

Pull out soon after coming. Hold the rubber at the base of the cock to make sure it doesn't slip off and no cum spills out.

### 7. Throw the used rubber away.

You should never use a condom more than once.

And never use the same condom to have sex with more than one partner — doing that could help spread infections from one person to the other.

### Complicated?

Not really. And not at all once you get comfortable with rubbers. You and your sex partner will be more comfortable with each other, too, knowing you're taking a little care to keep each other healthy.

## Black Coalition For AIDS Prevention

597 Parliament St., Suite 103  
(South of Wellesly)  
926-0122  
926-0281

### Anonymous Testing

Hassle Free Clinic Women 922-0566 Men 922-0603  
Anishnawbe Health Clinic 360-0486 or 920-0348  
Birth Control and STD Centre of North York 789-4541  
Mississauga East STD Clinic 820-3663  
Brampton-Caledon STD Clinic 840-1330

### Needle Exchange

The Works 392-0520  
Youth Clinical Services (North York) 742-2514  
Street Outreach Services 926-0744  
Anishnawbe Health Clinic 360-0486 or 920-0348  
Parkdale Community Health Centre 537-2455

## One in a million: tales of everyday terror

by Mike \*\*\*\*

I don't know...it's getting harder and harder to stay on top of the whole thing.

I DON'T TENSE UP when a police cruiser passes me...not anymore anyways.

"...hunting season..."

The eyes, they put in overtime though, haven't quite got control of them, the ears too. It gets to the point that if I don't feel the wind at the right time...

Doesn't matter what the situation... how calm or how safe or where I am.

I don't tense up though, I just... keep my eyes open... and my ears... and...

### DEVINEY

Off the hook  
Smoking a cigar  
See the triumph

I'VE SEEN VERY FEW pictures arouse as much outrage as the picture taken as he left the courthouse.

Was it relief?  
Does it matter?  
No, not now.

A little while later, he had a car accident (an intimate moment with a lamp post I think) and dropped off the face of the earth.

### WATCH THEM

STOREKEEPER AND HIS wife look him over as he gets a can of pop for the freezer.

A notice was sent throughout the downtown area warning the businesses to beware of black males in their late teens/early twenties since they are more than likely to commit crimes.

### GOING TO THE DANCE

HE IS STANDING in a large foyer. The place should be packed. It's not often we get DJs that look like real DJs. He walks over to the water fountain. Gets a drink, then he goes back to the wall. He can feel the music through the walls.

There's barely twenty people here. He recognizes four or five people in the group by the auditorium entrance. This dance is gonna crash. Hang around for ten, twenty minutes... see what happens.

### LEAVING THE DANCE

TWO OFFICERS APPROACH him. They ask him: What is he doing there? "Nothing," he replies. "Just waiting," for more people to show up, "friends."

They advise him to wait outside. "Why?" -Aren't they talking to the gang over there? One of the officers steps up to him. He looks at the officer's black boots, then looks up at

# The truth behind the carnage at Attica

by Tim Doucette

**T**he Attica State Correctional Facility is a maximum security prison about 35 miles east of Buffalo, New York. In the summer of 1971, Attica held nearly 700 more prisoners than the 1600 it had been designed for.

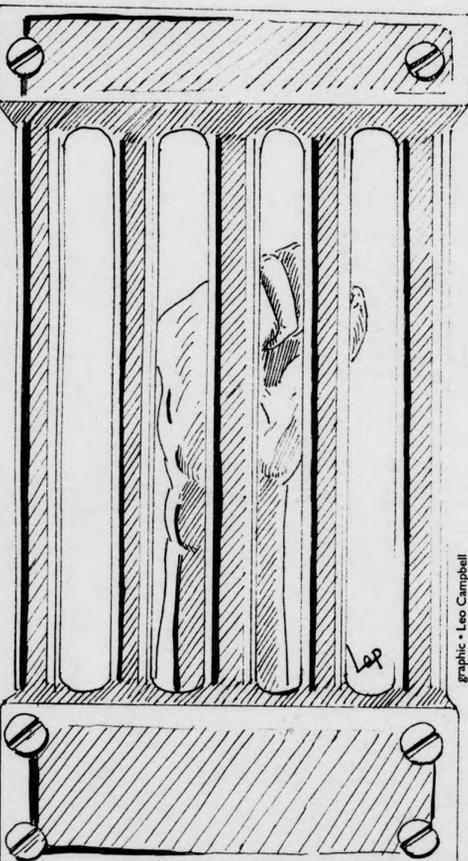
Fifty-four per cent of all prisoners were Black, the remainder being primarily Hispanics, Native men, and poor whites. All the guards were white, most of them recruited from the rural area around the prison. Racial tension was high, with the widespread censorship of Black magazines and books and the targeting of Black Muslims in particular.

And racial tension was encouraged between prisoners through such techniques as the distribution of jobs based on skin colour (whites given the best jobs while many other prisoners had none). Those who did work were paid an average of \$7.50 a month for boring, nondevelopmental labour. Meals were budgeted at sixty-three cents per prisoner per day and centred around starch and fat, containing few vegetables or fruit, and were high in pork, which Muslims can't eat. Medical care was grossly inadequate, with chronic and serious illnesses routinely shrugged off and left untreated.

The conditions at Attica were truly horrible, but hardly exceptional. Overcrowding, racism, economic exploitation and life-threatening medical don't-care were common features of prisons then as they are now. What was exceptional was the level of resistance of the Attica inmates to their brutal and dehumanizing situation.

## Ticking time bombs

On August 22, 1971, the prisoners held a day of mourning for Black revolutionary George Jackson, who had been shot to death the day before



graphic - Leo Campbell



at San Quentin prison in California. Outraged by the media swallowing of the official lie that Jackson had smuggled a large pistol into the prison in his afro, the Attica prisoners wore black armbands and unnerved their warders by silently refusing to eat. The steady ticking of the bomb echoed through the catacombs.

On the night of September 8, a goon squad of prison guards came to give a beating to a man who had been disobedient in the yard earlier that day. On their way in, someone winged an unopened can of soup through his cell bars and hit one of the enforcers in the head. The next morning, guards tried to leave the can-pitcher in his cell while everyone else was marched off to breakfast, but as inmates passed the locking mechanism at the end of the gallery, one of them pulled the lever that opened the man's cell, and the guards didn't dare stop him from joining the others.

Finally, the bomb exploded. On the march back from breakfast, a guard who had pushed an inmate was pushed back and knocked down. Other guards came running to his assistance but were overpowered by mutinous prisoners. Soon after, 1200 insurgent inmates had taken control of Attica, seized 46 prison officials as hostages, and gathered together in D-Yard, demonstrating a level of solidarity and self-organization that cut across the racial divisions fostered by guards and administrators.

## The D-Yard Nation

Dubbing themselves "D-Yard Nation," the Attica Brothers set up tents, dug latrine trenches, and gathered hostages together in a circle to protect them from vengeful recalitrants. Those guards who had been seriously injured during the initial uprising were quickly released, and the remaining 39 hostages were given food, clothes, cigarettes and mattresses, in some cases while inmates were sleeping on the floor. Civil rights attorneys, liberal journalists, Black Panthers and others were invited into the prison as observers as well as to document the conditions there.

Meanwhile, State Police from all over New York were rushed to Attica along with guards from other prisons. As troopers rebelled with prison authorities to begin an immediate assault on the rebellious prisoners, liberal reformer Russell Oswald, commissioner of the state correctional system, instead began negotiating with the inmates.

Most inmate demands were centred around basic living conditions and human rights — in fact, many were already enshrined in law and only needed to be put into practice — and so resembled Oswald's own bureaucratic attempts at reforming the brutal New York penal system that he soon agreed to nearly all of them.

On September 11, the death of one of the guards injured during the initial uprising brought negotiations to a halt. Inmates, already asking for guarantees against reprisals, added a demand of amnesty for any crimes committed during the takeover. The state refused: Nelson Rockefeller, the billionaire governor of New York, issued a statement denying the power to grant amnesty, and added that even if he could grant it, he wouldn't.

The stage was being set for a massacre. Hundred of cops of various stripes — all white — congealed around the prison, some shouting threats and racial insults, while others took pellets from shotgun shells and zipped them into the prison yard with slingshots. Police rage was compounded by rumours that hostages had been mutilated, murdered, castrated, and raped, some of them spread by top officials and reported in the media as facts before being proven lurid fictions. Some of the guards were so frenzied that Rockefeller ordered them not to participate in the assault, an order they would disobey.

## A classic turkey shoot

Oswald issued his ultimatum at 7:40 a.m. on the rainy, muddy morning of September 13. With bargaining stalled on amnesty, Oswald gave the rebels one hour to surrender their hostages and return to their cells. Knowing that beatings and indictments had followed all the New York prison riots of the previous year, the Brothers refused to give in, and eight hostages were taken up onto a catwalk, blindfolded, and each flanked by a prisoner holding an improvised knife to their throats.

The blitzkrieg began at 9:46 a.m. Seconds after a National Guard helicopter dropped debilitating military riot gas into D-Yard, police snipers opened fire on the catwalk. Although two hostages were injured by the Brothers' makeshift knives, the only killing done that morning was by police bullets: the prisoners had no guns. It was a classic "turkey shoot," like the assault the U.S. military launched on the infamous "Highway of Hell" during the Gulf war.

Other troopers lowered a ladder into the yard and charged towards the hostage circle. When an inmate knocked the lead trooper down with a club, the others opened fire with their shotguns. Hostages and inmates, indistinguishable in their muddied clothes, were shot as they ran or crawled for their lives, or as they lay unconscious, wounded or dead. Troopers sweeping through the yard fired blindly into foxholes and dugouts where men were hiding.

The shooting ended nine minutes later. More than 1500 men, all of them white, had taken part in the carnage. 10 hostages and 29 inmates had been assassinated. Three more hostages, 85 inmates and one trooper had been injured, in the largest massacre within the United States since Wounded Knee in 1890. At first, the state tried to blame the deaths on the prisoners and 61 were indicted, although all criminal proceedings were dropped in 1976.

For the past 17 years, a \$2.8 billion civil lawsuit on behalf of the 1281 inmates who were in the yard at the time of the blitz has been inching its way through the U.S. court system, and finally went to trial last September. Sometime this month, a decision will come down on whether four former state officials, including Oswald, will be held legally responsible for the deaths and injuries that occurred twenty years ago.

The decision was supposed to pass last month, but the judge, who initially refused to hear the case and sometimes took two years to rule on pretrial motions, went on his annual holiday to Barbados before the jury could return its verdict. This decision, of course, will only decide whether the men can be held accountable; reparations would have to be addressed in another trial.

## The torture afterwards

Although a legal victory for the Attica Brothers is by no means assured, perhaps the most interesting news to come out of the trial is the testimony, which includes details not only of atrocities committed during the retaking, but of the torture that took place afterwards.

Although the state had the forethought to send priests in to give hostages their last rites before the assault, at the time it was launched the only medics available were the prison's two doctors, two local veterinarians and several school nurses. They lacked medical supplies, blood and plasma and had to stand by as inmates bled to death. The few waiting ambulances were used to transport injured guards to area hospitals.

One former inmate, Oji Chris Reed, was left untreated for hours in a prison hospital, only to have a plaster cast put over an open gunshot wound on his leg. Two days later, the leg was amputated. Other prisoners were forced to run or crawl through a gauntlet of club-swinging guards, burned with cigarettes and shell cases heated in fire, dumped from stretchers and beaten with nightsticks, had IV tubes pulled out of their arms and blankets pulled off of their bodies, had gun butts and nightsticks jammed into their wounds and screwdrivers and guns shoved up their anuses. Medics testified to treating prisoners only to have them sent back later with different injuries.

Perhaps the most revealing testimony came from former National Guard medic Mark L. Futterman, who testified that as he was preparing to testify before a state panel that was investigating the Attica rebellion and its aftermath, he was visited by two state police investigators:

"They told me (that) I could testify to any events I witnessed, but (that) if it came to the point of identifying any uniforms or specific individuals, if I did that me and my family 'would have an accident on a dark road' — they would investigate (the accident), and that would be it."

Take whatever lessons you want to out of the Attica uprising and the state's response to it. *Excalibur* will carry news of the jury's decision in a future issue.

continued from facing page

the officer; the officer looks a foot taller than he is. He is aware that people have started staring at him. He feels a burning sensation in the back of his neck.

He leaves.

### DON'T LIE

"WE'VE HAD A SHOOTING..."

"...don't lie."

car door open and a body lying on the ground eyes open

"...one wounded..."

"...don't lie."

### TINY TOONS

A CARTOON DEPICTION. Okay, two policeman corner a black robbery suspect...

"Okay, you got me"

and shoot him. There's some initial panic, but his partner says don't worry about it: we'll say you tripped, you'll be suspended with pay, the courts, the judges are on our side:

"K-k-k court..."

His partner pats him on the back and they walk into the sunset

The dead body is bleeding on the ground while this conversation is going on...

A wicked grin. Of course, I was smiling when that guy was machine gunning civvies in "Full Metal Jacket."

### HOLE IN THE HEAD

CAR ROARING DOWN the road, two officers shooting

two holes

Robbery suspects apprehended, a gun discharges

one hole

### THE HOLE STORY

I REMEMBER RUNNING across some background info on Donaldson. It says: he was shot before; the peculiar bit is he was trying to get into his place of work. There were stories of him turning on or off the lights at the place he lived, much to the discontent of the people he lived with. Also heard he owned some houses. Heard stories that getting shot and the problems that followed him after that pushed him over the edge. Another line says that he could barely walk; a nurse was visiting him, giving him therapy.

To the shooting: there were five officers? Another shard of info says they had him under a mattress at one point to pacify him. He lunges at one of the officers with a knife... another one shoots him.

LAWSON DROVE LIKE a bat out of hell. I hear police only draw their guns when their lives are endangered (or when, naturally, the lives of the public are endangered) — so Lawson is fleeing, so they try to shoot out the tires... they miss.

Hell of a miss: shot him in the head. One of the other occupants is apprehended. Car stolen? How did they get it?

Accomplice, unwitting or whatever, he was fleeing.

Hole in the stomach

"Why'd you run?"

Hole in the back

"...paralyzed"

SOPHIA COOK IN NORTH YORK, paralyzed, she was one of three occupants of a car. She was offered a ride by friends. The group was stopped by police. The officer who was keeping an eye on her shot her in the back. I don't remember hearing anything about the struggle.

### BUS TICKETS

WE WERE WALKING home in the rain. He asks me if I read about what happened in the neighbourhood. Some high school girl, he found out, was being repeatedly sexually assaulted by a bunch of guys for lunch money for bus tickets, I won't go on...

rough cut: "why do Black people keep..."

I dunno. Why are we all being branded because of a bunch of assholes?

### BOUNCING OFF A CAR

TRIED TO SIDESTEP but he wasn't fast enough: leg off the hood, rest of him off the windshield.

He's sitting in the emergency ward now. A police officer walks in and calls his name. He answers and the officer takes a seat beside him and asks him his view of the accident. He tells the officer. The next question the officer asks is if the accident was intentional.

"...you can tell me."

### TAKING OUT THE LAUNDRY

HE'S WALKING DOWN the street with a green garbage bag. A horn sounds off behind him; it's a yellow police cruiser. The officer in the passenger side calls him over. Asks him what's in the garbage bag.

"Clothes."

He unties the knot and opens the bag and sees (I can see his eyebrows climb a mile up his face):

...wet clothes.

### HOLIER THAN THOU

OFFICERS RUN INTO a church during service. They never been much for religion... "but I sorta just fell down on my knees" (B.Cummings...a joke).

The officers take away some of the younger people in the service. They look like some people who committed a crime earlier that day.

"They made them take off their clothes?"

Yup, fruit-of-the-looms. You want better jokes, don't you? The officers were in error. So they apologized a little while later.

"How much is a little while later?"

A little while.

REMEMBER THAT INQUIRY into racism on the force? They remembered that notice sent to downtown stores.

"It was fun watching J.R. get toasted"

Now she's mayor.

"Oh, bite me now..."

WANNA HEAR ANOTHER drop-your-pants story? He rolls his eyes. This one happened in Peel — Mississauga I think. Officer pulls this guy over and searches him. Then he tells him to drop his pants, drop his drawers, to his knees. Meanwhile, his girlfriend is watching all of this from a window and traffic is passing by, getting a free show...

"...over the barricades."

next time  
"...Peel protesting the shooting of..."

we're going  
"...McCormack has met with members of the Black community..."

over the  
"...an officer then came out, shaken..."

barricades  
"...I'm the one who did it."

NO, IT'S GOING TO take something more to push'em over the edge. I think I've finally figured it out.

ART LYMER ADMITS the force isn't perfect, but that the chances of a racist officer are:

"...one in a million."

I don't know...it's getting harder and harder to stay on top of the whole thing.

I DON'T TENSE UP when a police cruiser passes me...not anymore anyways.

"...hunting season..."

The eyes, they put in overtime though, haven't quite got control of them, the ears too. It gets to the point that if I don't feel the wind at the right time...

Doesn't matter what the situation... how calm or how safe or where I am.

I don't tense up though, I just... keep my eyes open... and my ears... and...

### RIGHT

Sure it's not right. You're giving in to the hysteria. Letting your emotions be run by others.

"...local minority..."

"...one in a million"

Which ones?

### RISK

WE ARE LOST downtown. He looks at me and shakes his head. There's a cruiser at the corner. He mentions it: we could ask him for directions. "Sure, what's he going to do? Shoot us?"

He stiffens, then continues walking. I see something interesting here. I wanna try something.

"They frisk you when you take out the laundry..."

He keeps walking.

"If he says 'drop your pants' I'm outta here."

Lesser people have received the withering stare he gives me... and died. He shakes his head.

I go for directions.

# incarcerated...



by Jay

In a small confined room, I stare at four walls painted a sky blue. I sit in a bed, a bunk bed. I'm on the top bunk. The wall facing me is the door, a width of about a yard, the length about two and a half. There is a little inch thick window looking into the triangular setting range, where there are five picnic tables but only the seats are wood, the table top is iron. Since it is a triangular space, three

tables are set from the points of the triangle, to the base or flat line of the triangle length to length almost direct centre. The T.V., in the centre of the range, is encased in steel or iron mesh up high on the wall. There are two phones, totally local collect call phones. They're on from, I believe, 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., then from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Then we can use them from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Anyways, twenty people have to share those two phones, most of the

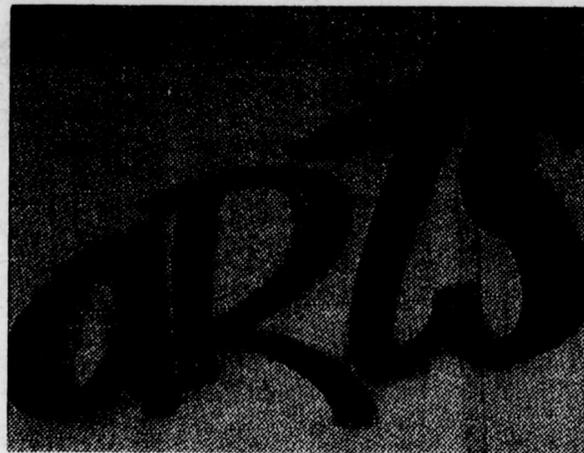
time only those who could handle themselves can attempt to use the phone. Because the phone is like a dream, it links you to the outside, or brings you in touch with the people you love. The phone would cause friends to fight and that's what makes it dangerous to want to use. Because if it would make friends fight, imagine two people who don't talk. The walls outside in the range are pink, floors are brown, but nearly everything is steel or concrete, little is

wood. Through this description you'll hopefully already know I'm in some kind of incarceration. They call it a Detention Centre. I call it a prison for the in-humane. When you enter, if you are not insane, depending on your time here, you will be

*Jay is a young offender presently serving time at the Metro West detention centre.*

"We are almost  
a nation of dancers,  
musicians, and poets."

Oluda Equiano



excalibur february 1 - 29 African History Month

# Pro-Black radical mix

By Trevor Burnett

"Can you believe those hypocrites  
who distribute Guns and Roses, but not our shit  
and they say we're a racist act  
ain't that the pot calling the kettle black."

• Geto Boys "We Can't be Stopped"

**H**ardcore Houston rap group the Geto Boys' song "We can't be stopped" could well be the victory song of the rap music industry in the 1990s.

Today rap (or hip hop, as it is often called) can't be stopped. Ever since this Black art form busted out of New York's South Bronx in the mid to late 1970s it's been a continual climb to the top amid censorship, bad press, and commercialization. Rap has emerged as arguably the most popular form of music around today. Any sceptic should look at music magazines such as *Rolling Stone* or *Billboard* and see the number of rap albums or singles charted — better yet, how many are in the top 10.

Rap albums are some of the fastest to reach gold, platinum, or double platinum status. Consider some of these album sales figures: Run DMC's landmark album *Raising Hell* (1986) sold 3 1/2 million copies, LL Cool J's *Bigger and Deffer* sold over 2 1/2 million in 1987. Public enemy's *Fear of a Black Planet* (1990) sold over a million in only a week. Tone Loc's mammoth single "Wild Thing" (1989) sold over 2 million copies and is now the second largest selling single in the history of popular music.

Even with all those achievements, the power of rap was largely overlooked until last June when hardcore Los Angeles based N.W.A's (Niggas wit Attitude) album *Niggaz4Life* made music history by debuting at number two on Billboard's top pop album chart, knocking out Paula Abdul's *Spellbound* at number one the following week.

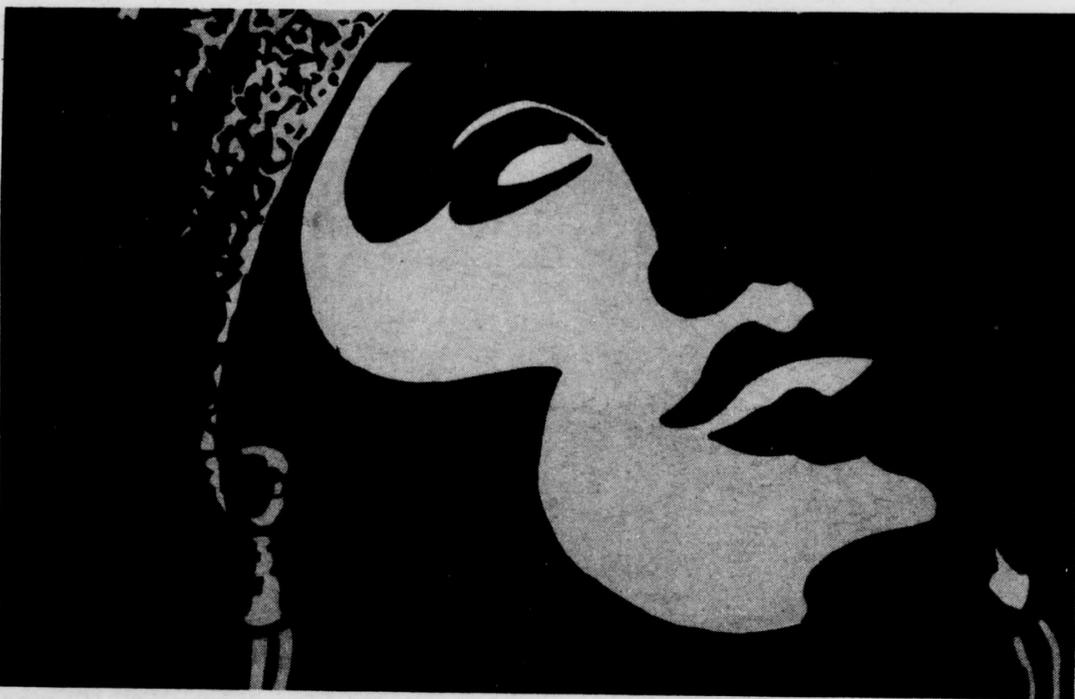
Jon Schecter, editor of hip hop magazine *The Source*, writes "[this was] the highest entry by any album since Michael Jackson's *Bad*. All this with no single, and no video... *Niggaz* is only the fourth album to top the pop chart in the last 16 years without generating a top 40 single."

Other rappers that have walked down the golden or platinum path include Big Daddy Kane, Salt 'N Pepa, Heavy D and the Boyz, De La Soul, Naughty by Nature, Two Live Crew, EPMD, Ice cube, Kool Moe Dee, The FatBoys, Boogie Down Productions, X Clan, Eric B and Rakim, Ice T, Digital Underground, Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince, and a host of others.

That's not bad for music that received neither Grammy recognition nor mainstream acceptance, and has often been described as a fad.

## Art and expression

**S**ome people listen to rap and think of it as only words and loud music. True, that's what you hear, but rap is much more. Rap is art. The way some rappers put together def beats and dope rhymes,



Cheap little rhymes  
A cheap little tune  
Are sometimes as dangerous  
As a sliver of the moon.  
A cheap little tune  
To cheap little rhymes  
Can cut a man's  
Throat sometimes.

Langston Hughes

graphic • Nicole Alfred



Salt 'N Pepa is one of many rap groups whose philosophical beats have translated into gold or platinum

they could be considered musical Pablo Picassos and Leonardo Di Vincis.

Rap is also expression. As Russell Simmons, CEO of Def Jam records attests, "Rap is an expression of the attitude of the performers and their audience. This probably explains why hardcore rappers have so much appeal — because there is a certain anger and rebellion to their music."

When rap first started, it spoke about, partying, sexual conquests, cars, "fly gear and fly girls and guys." It was just music to have fun and dance to. There was no need to classify it or carve it into genres. But the music has evolved, because of the differing personalities of rappers, and because of the politics of the music business.

Rapper Kool Moe Dee defined four types of rap in last December's edition of *Billboard*: "Pop/commercial: Hammer, Vanilla Ice, DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince;

street, which is N.W.A, Geto Boys, 2 Live Crew; somewhere in the middle is Heavy D, Queen Latifah, myself; and political which is Public Enemy, KRS-One."

## The Importance of rap

*"Black or White, left or right they tell lies in the books that your readin' it's knowledge of yourself that you're needin'."*

•Public Enemy "Prophets of Rage"

**P**ublic Enemy's Chuck D has referred to rap as "a CNN for Black people." What Chuck is saying is that rap is an important source of information.

Whether rappers are discussing police violence or the effect of drugs and alcohol in their communities, they are always entertaining and informing and current. When was the last time any one heard Luther Vandross or Phil Collins sing about the evils of crack or the necessity of unity and knowledge of self in the Black community? Though they are often maligned, groups like Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions and Ice Cube can be seen as trying to promote positive social change through their music.

One person who has his eyes open is Marc Emery. Emery, a white bookstore owner in London, Ontario who was charged in 1990 for selling copies of the banned Two Live Crew album *As Nasty as they Wanna Be*, says he stopped eating meat after listening to KRS-One's song "Beef," in which the rapper described the unsanitary ways meat is prepared for consumption by the general public. Emery said he began to read more about the philosophies of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X as a result of listening to rap.

Apparently rap is also a CNN for white people, especially white kids, who are among the biggest consumers

of rap. Emery thinks that the rap appeals to white kids because of its honesty.

"Today's white kids are a lost generation," Emery says. "They look at today's society — racism, worsening economic conditions — and see all the lies and hypocrisy that their parents have told them and they're restless. Rap is the only form of music trying to address the problems through revolutionary social change in a non-European way."

Emery's vision is honourable — but will rap really change white attitudes?

Journalist John Adams doesn't think so. "White kids will still grow up earning more money and living better on average in this society," he says.

Adams' point is well taken because racism still exists today, even though a generation of white kids grew up listening to Bo Diddley and Little Richard.

## Tellin' it like it is

**B**ecause of Rap's increasing popularity it has come under scrutiny from many corners. One obvious criticism pertains to lyrical content. Many hardcore songs contain blatant sexism, many songs refer to Black females as "hoes" and "bitches," and Black people are referred to as "niggas." Many songs also speak of murder and robbery.

For example, on "One Less Bitch", NWA's Dr. Dre raps about being a pimp and killing hookers who try to doublecross him, while band mate MC Ren Raps about gangbanging a fourteen year old "ho." Rap is art yes, but clearly some lyrics strain the limits of good taste, common sense and decency.

Do these lyrics influence people? Rapper Ice T says no. He has repeatedly stressed: "Just because you go to see Terminator or Rambo that doesn't make you want to get a gun and shoot people."

Bushwick Bill of the Geto Boys adds, "Real life isn't censored," while his partner, Willie D, raps "It's on the news every hour, why can't I talk about it."

NWA has often said "they're just tellin it like it is." Telling it like it is not a crime but many people feel that groups like NWA tend to glorify the decadence. As female rapper Harmony asserts: "Just because we're in filth doesn't mean that we have to stay there."

Whatever one's opinion is on this subject, it is important to note that the role of art in the Black community has always been hotly debated. In the 1920s, during the Harlem Renaissance and the age of the "New Negro" (the

compiled by John Bronski of Street Sound

"If people really wanna know rap music, they got to go back to the roots. We're new school, we're new booties in a gang. There's been people who's been in it for 15 years. I've only been in it three-four years, so you know we definitely new booties. So if you wanna know rap music you got to step back. You get to know where we got our inspiration from. If not, you'll just go by what's on top."

**Ice Cube:** Artist/Actor, his strong "Boyz In The Hood" inspired John Singleton to make the movie of the same name.

"I don't know if it was straight up B-boyish even in the beginning, and I'm talking about going back to the days of Kurtis Blow, Jekyll and Hyde and Whoodini, who were the first kind of hitmakers before Run-DMC hit. I think there was more variety in it than people in the music at that time gave it credit for."

**Bal Adler:** Author of *RAP-Portraits and Lyrics of a Generation of Black Rockers*, former head of *Rush Management* publicists *Rhyme & Reason*.

"The reason why the rap Identity is getting broader has to do with two things. First, the inevitable mainstream decision to pay attention to hip hop, as well as the broadening of the Black community in terms of class and education. Once Black folks get exposed to different things, these things are going to work their way on how we're going to express ourselves culturally."

**Scott Poulson-Bryant:** Spin writer and columnist for the Source.

"Just because a fad is out, that don't mean everybody's got to follow that fad. For me, example, I still be wearing my sweats and Nikes for the longest and I still got a 'fro on top of my head. Music and fad don't have to join together. Whatever comes along, whatever generation takes to it, they'll just go for it."

**Red Alert:** DJ on WRKS 97, New York

"Rap means to us a very strong medium of communication that has evolved. It's taken all course of angles. Our angle is an Afrocentric one, and we want to speak about the issues affecting not only Afro-Americans but the African community which, of course, is all connected."

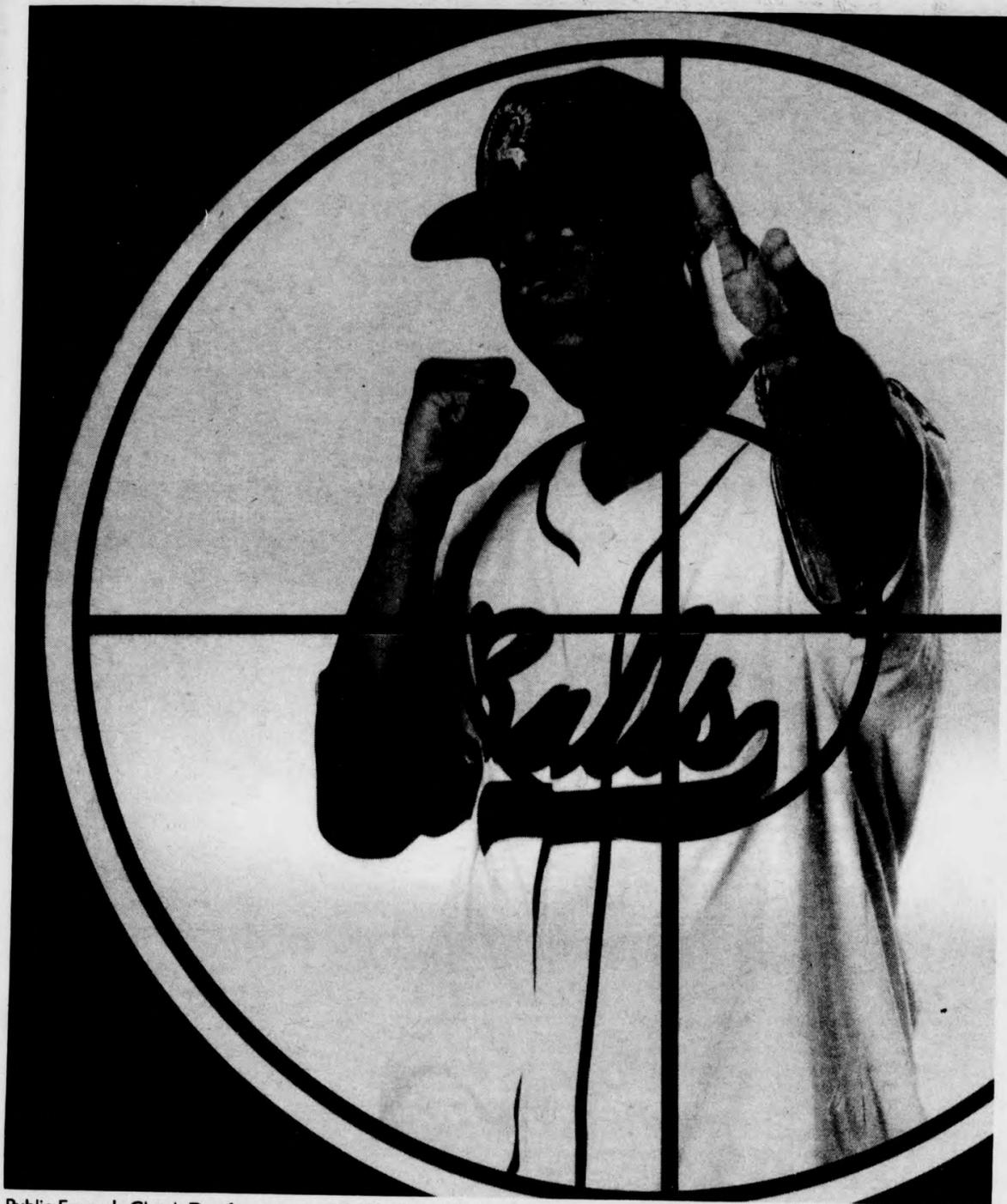
**Zimbabwe Legit:** African rap duo from Zimbabwe, signed to Hollywood Basic.

"The rap identity comes from us being ourselves. The music that we do, like 'Hanging Out', is about things that we do. We hang out with our friends." "Everything that we talk about or touch on is about everyday life. It's about what we go through. We don't write about things that don't relate to us."

**K-Kut and Sir Scratch** from *Main Source*, with debut LP *Breakin' Atoms*, on *Wild Pitch*.



Controversial rappers like Ice Cube can be seen as trying to promote positive social change through their music



Public Enemy's Chuck D refers to rap as "a CNN for Black people" — an important source of information

stronger, more assertive Black man), the debate existed. People like historian W.E.B. Dubois wanted art that reflected only the positive attributes of the race and its advancements, because it would show whites "we were civilized," thereby fostering better race relations.

Other, younger artists such as writers Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston didn't care about any positive messages. Their stories often reflected the lifestyles and speech of country folk and people in the ghettos. To them it was "art for art's sake."

Another important Harlem Renaissance figure, Alain Locke, agreed with Dubois but said "Artists like Hurston and Hughes take their material objectively. They have no thought of their racy folk types as typical of anything but themselves or of their being taken or mistaken as racially representative... they were being racial for the sake of art."

The funny thing is these aforementioned artists are today celebrated within the Black literary world; sixty years ago they were the NWAs' and Two Live Crews' of their day.

This 'art for art's sake' approach doesn't suit Ajamu Nangwaya of the Ujamaa Afrikan Peoples Organization. Like Dubois, Nangwaya feels that art should be political. Nangwaya asks: "What empowerment do the sisters get from being called bitches or hoes?"

Since rappers are an important voice that kids listen to, they have to be held accountable. But in condemning rappers one falls into a difficult area. Luther Campbell, the leader of the Two Live Crew, is well known for his sexist lyrics, but what about the thousands of dollars he has invested in community development and education funds in the Miami Ghetto of Liberty City? It doesn't make him a saint but at least he is socially responsible.

Also, all this talk of censorship is hypocritical.

In "One in a Million" Guns and Roses sing: "Police and niggers get out of my way / don't need your guns or gold

chains today." All they got was a minimal slap on the wrist in public response, while everybody calls Ice Cube and Chuck D racists and wants them banned.

The simple truth is that when rap was confined to the Black ghettos, white society didn't care about what was being said. However, since middle-class white kids are eating up rap in droves, there is suddenly protest and calls for censorship.

### I put this together to...

**A**nother important issue in a discussion of rap is sampling. Sampling means using bits and pieces of a song without asking permission, or without compensating the original artist in many cases. When rap was young most songs contained sampled material but sampling was not an issue. Since rap is big time now, older artists complain about thievery of their music.

Rappers don't see this as theft. They feel that they are doing the older artist a favour by exposing their music to a younger generation. As Daddy O of Stetsasonic rapped on "Talking all That Jazz": "Hip Hop brings back old r&b/ If it wasn't for us people would've forgot." Indeed, rap has helped to revive old careers: Run DMC rejuvenated Aerosmith's career.

Today I have a greater appreciation for the music of James Brown because of artists like Eric B and Rakim and Public Enemy. And it was because of my love for NWA's version of "Express Yourself" that I learned the original was done by Charles Wright in 1970.

Whatever one's perspective on the subject, sampling without paying is now illegal. Last year in an unprecedented move, a judge in New York ordered copies of Biz Markie's album *I Need A Haircut* removed from the shelves because a song on the album contained the illegally sampled 1972 hit "Alone Again Naturally" by Gilbert

O'Sullivan.

The last issue to be raised — and arguably the most important — concerns the very future of rap. It is the issue of commercialization, of artists going "pop" to appeal to a mainstream white audience. This issue was never more debated than when white rapper Vanilla Ice came on the scene. He was accepted for a while, but then the backlash started. It wasn't because he was white — it was because of his blatant lack of talent.

Rappers speaking out may have prevented a white audience from adopting Vanilla Ice as the new King of Rap but what about all the originators of rap? They will fade into obscurity. Last year this Vanilla Ice reportedly made over 18 million dollars. How much money has Afrika Bambaataa, Kurtis Blow or Grandmaster Flash made?

In the nineties, executives are going to be the death of rap. In their constant pursuit of profit they disregard and disrespect the message behind rap and go for the most commercially viable "product."

No matter how much we are disgusted by NWA, Geto Boys and Public Enemy, we can't dis them totally because they are "real" hip hop. If we abandon them we'll lose rap just like we lost jazz and rock and roll.

The worst-case scenario? Twenty years from now kids will think that rap started with Vanilla Ice and Hammer — just as they think today that rock is white music that started with Elvis and the Beatles. Heed the word of the brother, Ice Cube: "Pretty soon hip hop won't be so nice / no Ice Cube just Vanilla Ice."

"There's too much product on the market right now, so it's time for people to start causing waves again like in the beginning. People who play it safe are going to fall off, people who take chances will either hit real hard or miss, and those are the ones I'm gonna pay attention to."

*Funken-Klein: President, Hollywood Basic, "Gangsta Limpin" column in The Source*

"I rate rap by skills and am just hoping that with all the commercialism coming into rap the audience stays in tune and pays attention to more underground artists that are dropping more skills musically and lyrically."

"We rap street knowledge, intellectual knowledge and spiritual knowledge combined into one."

*Guru and DJ Premier from Gang Starr: Artists with second LP, Step into the Arena, on Chrysalis.*

"Right now, the identity of rap is like a homeless man, 'cause it's so much about having no sight of where he's going to be tomorrow. It's like he had a former life, possibly even a great former life, but right now his identity is lost. I feel that people just need to be more of themselves on records, and portray the people that they're tryin' to be, some of the fears they have or some of their hopes or ambitions. Instead, it's caught up in 'I wanna be like this because so-and-so is like this and works for so-and-so.' It's like some man sitting on the side of the street and wishing he had somebody's else's bowl of soup."

*Black Sheep: Artists with debut LP Wolf in Sheep's Clothing, On Mercury*

"Rap has become commercialized, it's something that was being created and people liked. It started to reach a wider audience and, as more and more people got involved, the base broadened and allowed room for new things to develop."

*David Mays: Publisher of The Source*

"If the beat is flavor and the MC can flip it in terms of cadence of intonation or the words he selects to use in a rhythm, or if there's certain different topics he talks about — if it's got flavor — I consider it rap music: that's hip hop. Hip hop can be defined more as culture which is made of a lot of different things like breakdancing, graffiti, smokin' a blunt, whatever it means to you... It's something from the heart: not everyone can feel hip hop or understand rap."

*Bobby Garcia: A&R Promo Rep, RAL/Def Jam records.*

"Aside from being rappers, we're into the business side of it. We also have a responsibility to our families and the young generation coming up. It's not just about making more money and selling records, it's about making money and selling records while you have the power that people want to hear what you have to say."

*EPMD: Artists signed to Def Jam*

**The Roosevelt, Renaissance, Gem, Alhambra:  
 Harlem laughing in all the wrong places  
 at the crocodile tears  
 of crocodile art  
 that you know  
 in your heart  
 is crocodile:**

**(Hollywood  
 laughs at me  
 Black—  
 so I laugh  
 back.)**

Langston Hughes



photo • David Sutherland

# The Actor-vist

by Jacen Braithwaite

**S**o you want to be an actor? And you just happen to be Black. Well, well, well. First, as an aspiring actor myself, I say more power to you. The road is rocky, but the rewards of a job well done are limitless. As a Black actor you must have a certain mentality. I call it the actor-vist mentality. An

actor-vist is a combination of an actor and activist.

As we all know, being Black in this world is not easy. There are obstacles every step of the way, including racism and stereotypes. Being a Black actor doesn't change this. One of the things that will help you is to get an education. By now, I believe that we all know, even those of us who dropped out of school, that we can't go far without

an education. Acting would be nice as a career, but you'll need a backup. Go to school. Period.

Another important detail is to keep your knowledge current. It will help you in your decisions about which roles to accept, who to work and not work with. By keeping yourself up on current events, you'll be able to carry on intelligent conversation, which is important to all Blacks, not just actor-vists.

Another important point: choose your roles very, very, very, carefully. I cannot stress the importance of this enough. There are too many negative stereotypes out there about Black people. Having the actor-vist mentality means working hard to destroy these stereotypes. If you allow stereotypes to continue, you're just limiting the amount of roles that you can get. When *The Young and the Restless* is looking for another doctor to cast, you can be damn sure that its not going to be another Black one! This is why as Blacks and

Black actor-vists, we must support such ground breaking efforts as *The Cosby Show*. In that family, the father is a doctor and the mother is a lawyer. In a Black family! And what do they say about the show? Its not realistic (no surprise there, right brothers and sisters?). But at the same time, *Growing Pains*, has a mother who is a journalist and a father who is a doctor. Have you ever heard that show called unrealistic? Think about it. I didn't think so. As an actor-vist, consider carefully the reason you were cast.

That brings me to my next point. The reason why these things can and do happen (negative, stereotypical casting), is the same reason why when you try to get a job Joe Whitey gets hired over you. The roles are written by whites for Blacks. The production companies are white owned, and the money is white money. So branch out, don't stick to acting. Become a producer. Become a director. Become a writer.

This is where knowing current events will help. You can write about things that are pertinent to Black people. You can also place Blacks in a more positive light.

At this point, I get to talk about my idol, Mr. Spike Lee. Spike epitomizes the meaning of the Black actor-vist. He is a writer, producer, director and he owns his own production company, aptly named "Forty Acres and a Mule." Spike should be an idol for any actor-vist and his achievements deserve the highest honours.

Finally, and most importantly, the actor-vist has to stay positive. This is even more important when an actor-vist gains widespread fame. It is your responsibility, as a actor-vist, to create positive role models for other Black people and for white people. And one more thing. Don't forget where you come from, because as long as you have a foundation, you'll only go up. Peace and 'NUFF Power, actor-vists!

## Screen Time: Black Canadian Cinema

by David Sutherland

**B**lack filmmaking in this country starts with documentary, and it starts rather recently. The late Jennifer Hodge de Silva is known as a pioneer in Black Canadian Cinema. In the seventies and early eighties she was the only Black Canadian filmmaker that consistently made films. Before that, there were films about Black folks maybe, but not by Black folks.

Hodge de Silva apprenticed at both the National Film Board and the CBC. She made a variety of social documentaries including: *In Support of the Human Spirit*, a film about the John Howard Society, an organization that eases ex-cons into life outside; *Joe David: Spirit of the Mask*, a film about a Native Canadian Artist, and *Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community*, a film about people in the Jane-Finch area. Her films found an audience but in some cases, that audience was almost prevented from seeing her work.

The Metro Toronto Police tried to block screenings of *Home*

Feeling'...for their own particular reasons. Our Cops are tops.

Jennifer Hodge de Silva died of Cancer in 1989 still immersed in film. A few years ago, a group of her friends and colleagues united to honour her memory at the Euclid Theatre, by donating a chair in her name. They also started a fundraising drive for a film about her life and work. From these collaborations, the Black Film and Video Network was born. The Network is a collective dedicated to raising the profile of Black Canadian Filmmaking.

With the creation of the Network, a new generation of filmmakers across Canada has emerged on the national scene. Among them: Sylvia Hamilton from Halifax and Claire Prieto from Toronto who collaborated on *Black Mother, Black Daughter*; Dionne Brand, who made *Sisters in the Struggle*; and Andrew Davis from Toronto, whose film (made while a student at Ryerson) *Good Hair, Pretty Hair, Curly Hair* debuted at the Toronto Festival of Festivals this past year.

For now African-Canadian cinema is in its beginning stages, but we have a lot of stories to tell each other, and a lot of history to make.



## Art in Motion

by Andrea Douglas

From early history Africans have danced with a spontaneity which sprung from the natural urge to express themselves in movement. Dance expression formed part of and represented the very life of the people. Essential in every

way to their very existence, dance manifested and celebrated the many stages of life — birth to death — fertility, improved health, war, history, mimicry, religion. Each dance had its own character in style and accompaniment and participation, but whatever the function, all the community participated.

### Check this:

- go to the Backstage Cinema to check out film during the Black British Film series playing in February and March. These films rarely make it across the Atlantic. Not to be missed.
- go to King Culture Video on Eglinton West (east of Keele) to rent Black Video.
- go to the NFB cinema Thursday, February 20 for a tribute to Jennifer Hodge.
- join Black Film/Video Network. 534-9148
- join Fullscreen (producers of colour) they're running workshops in beginning film/video production this winter. 961-9539
- join Trinity Square Video. They are running workshops in beginning/advanced video production. 593-1332
- read books.
- make movies.
- peace.
- out.

# Sketches: portraits of the Black arts community

**D**uring the past couple years, Toronto has been home to many organizations and individuals who've consistently and actively taken risks to promote public and private support of Black artists. Sometimes they actively demonstrate against racist, sexist and classist representation and appropriation of Black culture. Listed here are only a few of the community spaces, some non-profit and some for-profit, providing solid grounding for Black artists and community.

**Sister Vision Press** was founded by Stephanie Martin and Mikeda Silvera in 1985 to publish works by women of colour—works that were not previously accessible to the general Canadian public.

In 1991 Sister Vision published ten books, a dramatic rise from the numbers published in previous years. Titles included celebrated actress Djanet Sears' *Africa Solo*, the first published play by a Black woman playwright in Canada; Ramabai Espinet's *Nuclear Seasons*, which was the first book by an Indian-Caribbean woman publishing where Afro-Caribbean voices usually take precedence; Lenore Teeshig-Tobias' *Bird Talk*, a children's book dealing with the experience of First Nations children in the school system (in English and Ojibway translations); dub poet Ahdri Zhina Mandiela's *Dark Diaspora in Dub*, which is also being presented during the next year as a riveting stage play; Himani Bannerji's *Doing Time*, crucial poetry reflecting the experience of a woman from India speaking about isolation and alienation within Canada, and the *Lesbian of Colour Anthology*, bringing together a diverse range of women's voices and cultures including Filipino women, Arab women, Black women, and many others.

Sister Vision's bright future is closely tied to creating access for voices that have not spoken yet or don't have access to print. The significance of 1991 for Sister Vision is that in finally having published 16 titles they are now eligible for Canada Council block funding like any other publisher.

To contact Sister Vision, write to P.O. Box 217, Stn. E, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6H 4E2.

There are many other independent publishers supporting the work of Black women writers, writers of colour and First Nations writers including **Between The Lines**, an alternative press which distributes the writings of groundbreaking Black feminist writer bell hooks; **At The Crossroads**, a journal by women of African descent; **Williams-Wallace Publishers**, one of the longest-established presses which publishes works of people of colour; the **Metro Word**, a stylish new bi-weekly Black arts newspaper.

**Canadian Artists Network-Black Artists In Action** came together to organize an international Black artists' conference in conjunction with the U.S.-based National Conference of Artists. The group decided that organizing such a conference should culminate in a Canadian network of Black artists.

CANBAIA's first major organizing effort resulted in the Black Artists On Access series from 1990 to 1991. Black Artists On Access

brought an unprecedented number of African-Canadian artists, from a wide range of disciplines, together with funders and non-artist community members to examine the issues surrounding lack of funding for Black artists and to discuss possible solutions. CANBAIA will publish the results of the BAOA project within the next few months.

This year, CANBAIA is hosting the 1992 International National Conference of Artists at Harbourfront. Black artists from all disciplines from around the world will share their work and experiences with Torontonians from July 5 to July 12 at the conference, which will feature a special focus on African-Canadian artists in a show called Canadian Odyssey.

Volunteers interested in helping with the conference can contact CANBAIA at 369-9040.

**Verse To Vinyl Records** and **Well Verse Publishing** were founded by Canada's premiere dub poet and two-time Juno award winner, Lillian Allen, several years ago so she could distribute her material and the works of other independent performers and writers.

Allen, an experienced cultural strategist, is currently involved in consulting with various communities and with Ontario's Minister of Culture around the issues of access and cultural equity. She has been involved for several years, along with other Black artists, in assessing the kind of changes necessary to make government funding systems like the Ontario Arts Council more accessible to a wider range of artists.

Lillian Allen's vision of the future of local arts organizing is based on the belief that it is essential to establish cultural community development based on self-determination and community building. She sees her work with younger people interested in the arts as a major area of community building. One example is a Montreal-based dub poet named Michael Pintard, who has taken the charts of community radio stations by storm with a new cassette produced by Allen.

Future plans for Allen include organizing an international dub poetry festival with Ahdri Zhina Mandiela (founder of *b current*—an organization which commissions original works from dancers and other artists) and dub poet-at-large Clifton Joseph (a member of the staff at TV Ontario on the literary program *Imprint*). Allen, a wandering troubadour familiar to Black communities and many others throughout Canada, continues her own performances appearing across North America from Calgary, Alberta to San Francisco, California.

**The Black Film and Video Network (BFVN)** is an organization

**"The artist has always functioned in African society as the record of the mores and experiences of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time"**

Wole soyinka

which has quietly and methodically organized to provide support for young and emerging film and video makers. BFVN came together to encourage the production, screening and airing of Black films and videos in Canada, spending a large part of their efforts on skills development.

The first major BFVN project was a presentation of the works of Jennifer Hodge DaSilva followed by a Paul Robeson retrospective.

These BFVN activities have helped to bring Black community and members of the wider community together in greater appreciation of Black film and video. Since inception, the BFVN has helped to make inroads in the film and video industry and to gain increased public visibility for local and visiting Black film makers at events like Toronto's prestigious Festival of Festivals.

As an organization, the BFVN's ability to clearly state its objectives, its extensive lobby efforts and painstaking attention to detail have translated into greater access to funds for the network and its individual members. In 1992 the BFVN's organizing will flower in the form of promotion and support of works produced by members like Christine Brown, who is currently directing film as part of a National Film Board series on poverty; McTair and Preito, who have just completed a film about Jennifer Hodge and are in development of a film about the Black man; Alphonse Adetuyi, who is directing *Survivors*, a new film for the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention about Black women and AIDS; Djanet Sears, who is making her debut as a director of a half-hour film about a group of older black people whose main activity is stealing lawn boys; Glace Lawrence

and Cameron Bailey, who are developing scripts.

*The BFVN meets regularly, always welcoming new members. If people want to get in touch contact the BFVN at 534-9148.*

**Ken Bruzual** is a Toronto-based cultural activist who draws his experience from 25 years of organizing within the Caribbean arts community. Two years ago, Bruzual attended the Toronto Arts Council's Let's Talk series, part of an arts information outreach project which began in 1987. As secretary of the Calypso Association of Canada (CAC), Bruzual quickly recognized that three years after the original series took place there was still little or no participation by members of Toronto's Caribbean community and also that the percentage of funding to the Black and Caribbean community was negligible.

Bruzual then volunteered to conduct outreach sessions into these communities and received positive response from the TAC and Ontario's Ministry of Culture and Communications. With support and sponsorship from the CAC and the Ontario Mas Bands Association, a session was held a year ago at the Ralph Thornton Community Centre. Calypsonians, band leaders, folk band troupes and steel bands were joined by representatives from the TAC and Ontario Arts Council (OAC).

After the success of last year's outreach project, Bruzual organized a new series for 1992 which has received even more interest from funders and a wider range of community artists and are being held prior to funding deadlines to give applicants an opportunity to take advantage of this information ser-

vice. But with funding cutbacks this year, Bruzual's series is being done without sponsorship, so there is a small fee of \$3 to cover costs.

Bruzual hopes that this project will help artists and cultural organizations decipher the access codes to arts council funding. With the particular concern of youth in mind, Bruzual hopes to establish an arts foundation to provide the consistent support necessary to nurture and maintain a diverse Black artistic future.

For more information about Ken Bruzual's funding info series, call 469-0210.

**MultiCultural Women In Concert (MWIC)** is a non-profit cultural organization founded in 1983 to promote the cultural works of women of colour, lesbians and working-class women through producing concerts, audio tapes, skills workshops and festivals.

One of the problems they've faced is dealing with the capricious nature of government funding, so MWIC is working with the Political Dyke Network, Black Socialist Lesbians and other groups to establish Camp SIS (Sisters in the Struggle). Twenty acres of land have been donated by members of the Black Women's Collective (Toronto Chapter) for the establishment of a cultural centre for progressive people, located 2 hours north of Toronto. Funds towards the building of Camp SIS will be raised without government assistance so that activities developed at the camp won't be restricted or bound by government policies but will more accurately reflect the needs of the community.

For more information contact MWIC at 967-1324.



photo • David Sutherland

# Step One: Educate Yourself

... **Being Brown** by Rosemary Brown.....One woman's story about being Black in Canada. Relevant to black females..... **Sans Souci** by Dionne Brand..... **The Temple of my Familiar** by Alice Walker....Alice Walker has an uncanny way of putting her finger on the pulse of what it is to be Black. It is a self-awareness novel..... **A Small Place** by Jamaica Kinkaid..... **Black Boy** by Richard Brown.....Black males must read.....powerful stuff..... **Lionheart Gal: A collection** by Sister Vision Press..... **Sula** by Toni Morrison.....It portrays the relationship between two Black women and how fragile their relationship is..... **My Green Hills of Jamaica** by Claude McKay..... **Black Pearls: Blues Queens of the 1920's** by Daphne Duval Harrison.....Gives a view of some of the forgotten great blues singers in the early part of the 20th century ..... **Two Thousand Season** by Oyi Kwei Omah ..... **First A nalogy of Black Poetry and Prose** by Ed ..... Inspiring collection of ideas, values and attitudes from the Black perspective in Canada ..... **The African Origin of Civilization** by Cheik Anta Diop ..... **Black Skin, White Masks** by Franz Fanon ..... This book offers an anguished and elegant description of psychological effects of colonialism on the colonized ..... **No Man in the House** by Cecil Foster ..... **God's Bits of Wood** by O. Sombre ..... Provides reader with good understanding of the experience of colonialism (the struggles, the self-determination, etc.)

**"...reading changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive."**

Malcolm X

..... **Black Jacobians** by C.L.R. James ..... **The Ideology of Racism** by Samuel Kennedy Yeboah ..... Reader is given a lot of information on African history (eg. Egypt) ..... **Wretched of the Earth** by Franz Fanon ..... **How Europe Underdeveloped Africa** by Walter Rodney ..... Gives reader a good understanding of capitalism in Africa ..... **Dust Tracks on a Road** by Zora Neale Hurston ..... **Blacks in American Films and Television** by Donald Bogle ..... Tells of the contributions Africans have made to the American silver screen.....



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# media

Media

**“Don’t believe the hype.”**

**Flavour Flav**  
*Public Enemy*

## Soul Man: Norman “Otis” Richmond

Norman “Otis” Richmond is the articulate host of *Diasporic Music* and *From a Different Perspective* on CKLN 88.1 FM. Both shows deal directly with the affairs and concerns of people of African Descent. Otis manages this while spinning the most devious selection of Black music ranging from classic Motown to hardcore hip-hop to reggae. As well as being a radio personality, Otis is also very active in the Black community and is the president of the Black Music Association (BMA) in Toronto.

I caught up with Otis after the completion of yet another highly informative show.

By Dalton Higgins

**excalibur:** For those people like myself, who aren’t aware of the Black Music Association, could you give me a brief explanation of what this organization is all about?

**NR:** The BMA was founded by Kenneth Gamble in Philadelphia. It is basically a trade association to fight for a fair share of the music industry for Black people. We started up a Toronto chapter and there was at one time eight or nine

chapters across the U.S., as well as one in England. We started the organization to uphold Black music. This includes the DJ’s, record companies, artists, and other people associated with the business, not just the singers and performers.

**excalibur:** You appear to have an extensive record collection, judging by the great records you play on your show. Who are your favourite Afro-American musicians?

**NR:** I like all kinds of music from the Black world. I respect Duke Ellington because he wrote music about history, he wrote about Africa, about Black people in the U.S. and about the Haitian revolution as well. I respect John Coltrane too. John Coltrane was like Malcolm X with a saxophone. I also like Max Roach and Dinah Washington to name a few.

**excalibur:** I know many people who believe that Black music is one of the greatest curiosities that white people have. Being involved in the music industry, what are your views on the exploitation of Black music (ie. New Kids on the Block and Vanilla Ice)?

**NR:** Vanilla Ice is like a minstrel. It started with white people, imitat-

dians don’t have that same mentality — to exploit the talent.

**excalibur:** Do you think Toronto will ever get a radio station that caters to the Black (urban, etc.) community?

**NR:** I certainly hope so. FM 108 has now changed their format to dance, although that is not in the hands of African people. African

**“If now isn’t a good time for the truth I don’t see when we’ll get to it.”**

Nikki Giovanni

ing Black people during slavery. Paul Whiteman became the King of Jazz, Benny Goodman became the King of Swing, and Elvis became the King of Rock’n’Roll; although Little Richard claimed he was the King and Queen of Rock’n’Roll. Vanilla Ice, I guess you could say, is like the Pat Boone of Rap. He is just not that talented, nothing personal.

**excalibur:** The fact that hip-hop, funk acts etc. have to ship their talent south of the border. What do you think about the state of the Canadian music industry?

**NR:** I don’t think Canadians take risks like the white people of corporate America. Most of the record companies are now owned by the Japanese, the Germans and the Dutch, but historically, the multinational records would see a Black artist and say “I give you a million dollars” because they know they can make 10 million off of them. These people are willing to put some money behind the artists because of this. Cana-

people don’t own that station. I am more concerned with Black people not just being the disc jockeys and singing the music, I am interested in Blacks exercising their ownership capabilities. I would like to see a Black owned and operated radio station or music company. I mean we can’t own a Chinese restaurant, music is like our oil, and I think we should be able to control this natural resource. Nobody should be able to get more than 49 percent of this natural resource from us. If we share our music with anyone, we should own at least 51 percent, the most we should give up is 49 percent. Black people have been put in a sharecropping situation, where we go into the back door to get 20 percent of something we should go into the front door to get 100 percent of. That’s the history of Black people, and the history of Black music.

Norman Otis Richmond can be heard Thursday from 8 - 10 pm and Sundays from 6 - 6:30 pm on CKLN 88.1 FM.

## What's it gonna be, Black or White?

By Jomo Ashley Dey

African history month is a celebration of Black heritage. It is a time for Black people to become more aware of the perils of society and it also allows us to recognize and appreciate the advancements made by other Black people. During this special time Black superstars are looked to, especially by the younger generation, as positive examples of the success Blacks can achieve in the entertainment arena.

Michael Jackson, one of the most awarded names in music, epitomizes the word ‘entertainer.’ He has sold more albums than any other artist, with his best selling album *Thriller* surpassing forty million copies. He has reached legendary status. He is the King of Pop.

However, this larger-than-life superstar has a black mark against him, or should I say a “white” mark. To many, Michael Jackson has distanced himself from his heritage and culture. With the release of each new video it becomes more evident that he is choosing to disassociate himself from Black people. Witness his drastically changed appearance.

In “Black or White,” the most recent video from his latest album *Dangerous*, Jackson’s hair is longer and straighter and his skin appears even lighter than in pre-

vious videos. He appears to be making a conscious effort to alter the characteristics that are distinctive to Black people.

Most Blacks who grew up listening to Jackson find his transformation appalling. His actions alienate the very people who supported him and made him what he is today.

The King of Pop (which he was officially dubbed upon the release of *Dangerous*) has a knack for creating controversy. This, along with his enormous popularity, makes him an easy target for scrutiny. For instance, the premiere of his video “Black or White” (which went to the number one position on Billboard faster than any other single) caused a huge commotion as people tried to analyze what it “really meant.”

For some, the violence and “dirty dancing” is the source of controversy. For the Black community, however, it is the complexion of Jackson’s face that warrants attention. The theme of the song stresses racial harmony, with lyrics such as “It doesn’t matter if you’re Black or White” and “you shouldn’t spend your life being a colour.” Well, perhaps you shouldn’t spend your life being a colour, but you should accept your colour. Ironically, Jackson contradicts his own message. If it really doesn’t matter if you’re black or white then, then how

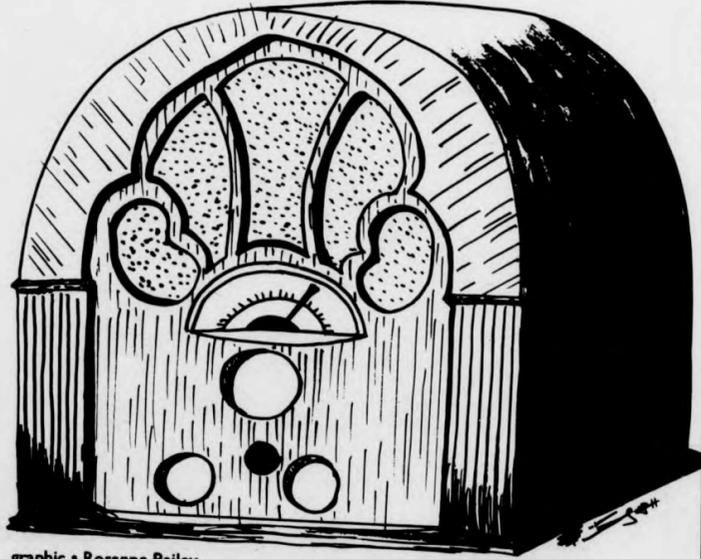
does he explain his feverent attempts to lighten his skin?

Looking back at his previous work, Jackson’s complexion was clearly darker than it is today. The transformation is obvious, and the underlying message is that being white is somehow better. This presents a negative outlook to young Blacks who see Jackson as a role model.

Jackson’s conscious rejection of his “Blackness” reinforces the idea that Black’s should neglect their community and culture once they have attained success in the white world. This is definitely not a message Blacks want perpetuated. The message we want to reach our young people is that you can achieve whatever goals you set for yourself and maintain a sense of pride without relinquishing your cultural identity.

Michael Jackson’s life is an American success story. The work he does is fabulous and should by no means be disregarded by Blacks or whites because of his changed appearance. But at the same time he must be held accountable for his actions. On a positive note, Teddy Riley, who helped produce Jackson’s latest album, said in a recent edition of *Rolling Stone Magazine* that Jackson’s gives the distinct impression of regretting some of the decisions he has made in the past about his appearance.

Well, it’s a start.



graphic • Rosanne Bailey

# The message behind the medium

By Dwight Whyllie

Commenting on the state of Canadian media, a researcher once said if a visitor to Canada turned on the television in a hotel room, he or she might easily conclude that the country had no racial minorities except for the odd Black athlete or entertainer, and the occasional Native banging a drum.

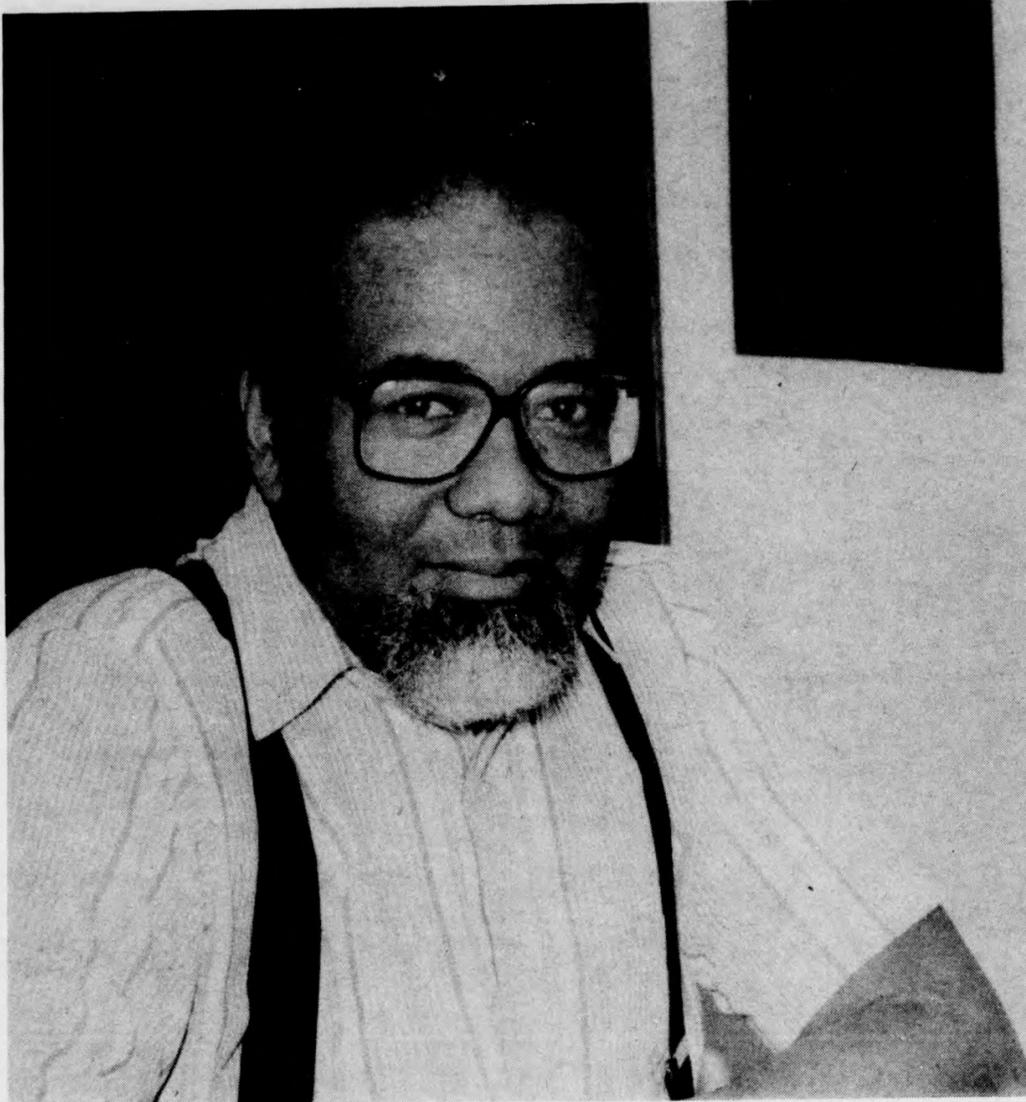
Six years ago, when the comment was made, none of the news readers on television were Black or Chinese or anything other than white; only the occasional reporter had a face or voice which looked or sounded different from southern Ontario English or southern Quebec French.

The Canadian picture has changed somewhat in the past few years. We see someone like Noelle Richardson anchoring CBC News from Toronto, or Ian Hanomansingh reporting from Vancouver for the National, and JoJo Chinto on City TV. Or you may hear me on CBC Radio News. But we are still the exceptions.

With print media, the story is even more discouraging. Because there is anonymity, it is difficult to know what the racial and cultural mix is. In fact, there are proportionately fewer minorities working at newspapers or magazines in Canada than in electronic media.

I remember six years ago covering the Grenada elections, after the coup and intervention, for *Macleans*. Out of curiosity I asked about minority editorial staff. I was told rather sheepishly that there were some Italians and Jews and the odd Greek or Eastern European. So I made the question more specific by asking about visible minorities. There were none. But there were quite a few on the clerical and service staff.

What this means is that minority Canadian children see few people looking or sounding like themselves in the media. The message is clear: people like you don't matter in this society. It also means most journalists and broadcasters have little knowledge about the multiplicity of other races and cultures that make up this society. Consequently stories



Distinguished vocal stylings of journalist Dwight Whyllie can be heard on CBC 740 on your AM dial. photo by David Sutherland.

about them are seldom covered. And when they are covered, it is usually a crisis story about violence or some unusual cultural event.

When one minority group tried to redress the imbalance by seeking a radio station it collided with the same mindset. Milestone Communications, of which I was a director and investor, had its bid for a Black/African/Caribbean station turned down in

favour of a country music station. This happened just after the only existing country music in the Toronto market changed its format because it was losing money. The justification was that country music represents Canadian content. Nonsense. Most of the music is American. In contrast, the Milestone proposal would have given major airplay to a wealth of local Canadian talent. The talent is

Black, Caribbean and cross-cultural but the powers that be don't see it as Canadian.

It looks like a bleak picture, but it has brightened somewhat in the past few years. Most broadcasters now have policies of employment equity and are looking for minority people to produce, report and announce.

The CBC established an employment equity office four years ago, and

a task force on equity two years ago. Out of these came a powerful policy to make the national public broadcasting system more reflective of a multiracial and multicultural Canada.

But the change hasn't been as fast as it could have been for a number of reasons. The lingering excuse -- which has some truth in it -- is that they can't find qualified minorities, or even competent minorities interested in learning the job.

And because of the lack of role models in media, few minority young people consider radio, television and print as careers.

The time has come to test the policies and push the doors. There are enough proven minority professionals now practising the media skills to break the old stereotypes of incompetence or unsuitability. And official hiring policies are in place. But make sure, if you are a minority who makes it through the front door, to work twice as hard and perform twice as well to overcome a secondary level of scepticism that still sees those minority professionals as exceptions.

There are people who expect you to fail and who will only acknowledge your competence grudgingly. But the rewards, if you succeed, are great. Not only does the media offer stimulating and challenging careers, by being in the public eye you give your minority brothers and sisters role models and a sense of belonging to this society, and make it easier for them to choose careers in communications.

Peace and love.

## Strange Misunderstandin'

Strange those who mis-under-stand me have not yet found the time or made the effort to know what I am about

— Wayne Salmon

## Now is the time to stop the stereotypes

by Carol Higgins

Since slavery, the colour of our skin has defined us as a group to be placed at the bottom of the social ladder. This oppression exists on a global scale. I know of no country, city or community where Blacks are held in high esteem.

Stereotypes have been un-

justly attached to us because of the colour of our skin. We are frowned upon, loathed and even feared by the rest of humanity because we are Negro, colored, of colour, African, Afro-Canadian, African-American, Jamaican, Bajan, Trinidadian, Caribbean or Black. We have been labelled criminal, pimp, junkie, athlete, entertainer, learning

disabled, unwed mother, token, troublemaker, welfare recipient and government housing resident.

And we have labelled other Blacks, who have stepped outside the imaginary boundaries of Black achievement, Uncle Tom, white-washed, sell-out. We have even adopted, and in many instances accepted, the labels forced on us by non-Blacks and unthinkingly referred to ourselves as butu, jigaboo, nappy and nigger.

The media has failed us and continues to do so as it reinforces the stereotypical roles of Black people. Blacks are never doctors endorsing Crest or fortunate stay-at-home mom singing the praises of new Tide with bleach. Instead, we are the comic or the superstar athlete uttering a monosyllabic one liner endorsing the latest in active footwear after doing what we do best: running, jumping, slam-dunking or making touchdowns.

Except for a few Spike Lee joints, Blacks are never at the forefront on the big screen.

The education system also fails us. Our children are not given an accurate portrayal of

their history. African and Caribbean history is not taught in our schools. Africa is seen as a place where Westerners got slaves. Everything positive about African culture, people and accomplishments has been dismissed by the education system as unimportant.

It is time for us to fight the system that is responsible for developing and maintaining these stereotypes.

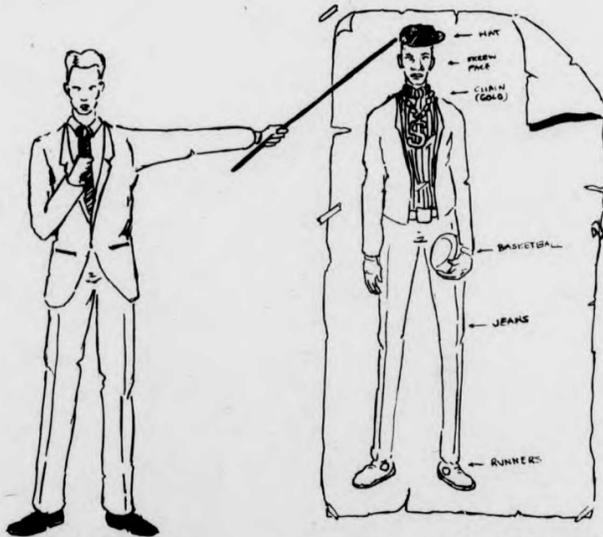
We must stop patronizing stores such as Benetton which claim to have a multicultural theme but blatantly reinforce stereotypes about Black people in their advertisements.

We must dismantle the phenotypic hierarchy of skin shade, hair texture, eye colour, nose and lip size that exists within the Black race. It serves no purpose but to divide the community.

And most of all we must educate our children. We must instill in them love, respect and acceptance of themselves as Black people. And we must teach them their past so they can make their future. As Black people we are full of life and history. We are intelligent, loving, admirable, passionate and beautiful. Our children should be proud.

“Many intelligent Black men seem to look uncivilized when on the screen, like I guess I figure you to play some jigaboo. On the plantation what else can a nigger do? Black women in this profession—as for playin’ a lawyer, out of the question. For what they play Aunt Jemima is the perfect term. Even if now she got a perm.”

— Big Daddy Kane



graphic • Leo Campbell

# “Education”

The information of what we have to be proud of is not getting out to our children. Consequently, they grow up not being proud of anything remotely connected to themselves.

David Lemieux

## 100 percent intelligent Black child

By Donna Jones

### Thirteen years of dissatisfaction

Ignorance is a disease of the mind. Education is its only cure. As an individual who has gone through thirteen years of the Canadian school system I have seen the promotion of ignorance and misunderstanding among young Black students by the public school system. Black History programs as part of the educational curriculum simply do not exist. It was not until I reached the post-secondary level of my education that I got the opportunity to take any subjects that dealt strictly with Black studies. Both in elementary and secondary school history was, for me, Christopher Columbus, Confederation, European revolutions, and the like. Any knowledge that I possessed about my history and the major contributions Black people have made to our society was definitely not acquired in school. This alone is cause for concern.



photo • David Sutherland

### Kids Talk

I spoke to several Black students between the ages of seven and twenty to find out about the present conditions of the school system. As

times are changing and many are becoming politically aware, I assumed that by now Black history would be a part of schools agenda.

But after speaking to students I realized I was wrong. Of the ten students I spoke to, all informed me they have no classes whether at the elementary or secondary levels, that deal with Black history. The focus of these children's education was on Canadians of European extraction.

Of these ten students only one could name a Black inventor while more than half could name at least two white ones. These children's past is being kept from them. They know little of the struggle of their people, and they are oblivious to the fact that their forbearers were a part of Canadian history as much as any other Canadian individual. This is the pattern of education beginning with Kindergarten and continuing all the way up to the OAC level.

### “Bored of education”

There has been a growing concern within the Black community about number of Black students who fail to graduate at the secondary level with other class members. Is there a correlation between the failure rate of Black students and the current education system?

Many teachers simply overlook the problem of poor achievers especially if they are Black. Teachers encourage Black students to participate in sports for the benefit of the school but do not help them academically.

The education system, as it exists, does not assist in providing the

proper tools for motivating Black students. If Black studies were incorporated in the public school system, students would develop a sense of pride and in turn would try harder to achieve academic success.

Young children know all about the great European artists, inventors, and philosophers, but very little about the Black ones.

According to Kevin Jacobs, a York University student in his second year, “The only thing I learned while in school was that Black people were cotton pickers and Slaves.” If this is all Black youth are learning in school we should be very proud of those of us who have managed to debrief the school system and have been able to make it to the top.

### EUROPEAN HIST



graphic • Leo Campbell

### Solutions

It is clear that there is definitely a problem. The question is what can

we do, as a race, to help correct the present situation?

I spoke to several University students all of whom have gone through at least eight years of the Canadian public school system. All of these students informed me that they did not have any subjects in elementary or high school that dealt strictly with Black studies. Many of the students that I talked to felt that if we could employ properly qualified Black teachers to teach Black children about the importance of their history, in schools designed specifically for Black students, it would be beneficial. Many students also said it was the responsibility of parents to help their children in understanding their culture and historical importance in Canadian society.

By far the most popular solution suggestion made by the students was to have Black studies introduced into the schools as a part of the curriculum. This would help Black students to be part of the text rather than be on the outside looking in.

### A professional conclusion

To end my research I spoke with Epidemiologist, Dr. Delroy Lowden who did a study on depression and parental bonding in West Indian adolescence, through the University of Toronto.

According to Lowden it is not in the interest of school administrations for all students to do well. Lowden said the system is set so that only a small number of students manage to squeeze through and go on to become successful. According to Lowden, it is “dangerous” for West Indian males to go to school. Lowden said Black males are not expected to do well and are therefore more likely to be diagnosed as having learning disabilities.

Lowden said his studies also showed a significant number of Black males who have achieved high IQ scores still end up in correctional institution. The teachers have low expectations of the Black males therefore, regardless of their academic abilities, they have a less likely chance of succeeding.

It is imperative for Canadian society to become aware that children, especially Black children, are faced with an on-going dilemma within the educational system. And it is up to us to find solutions for the future generations that are to come.

### Curriculum

I must speak bi/lingual  
neither one of them mine  
I must study centuries of history  
none of it mine  
I must read a thousand authors  
none of them mine  
I hear a thousand voices  
none of them speak to me  
not one of them speak of me

Wayne Salmon

I am not Entirely Obscure

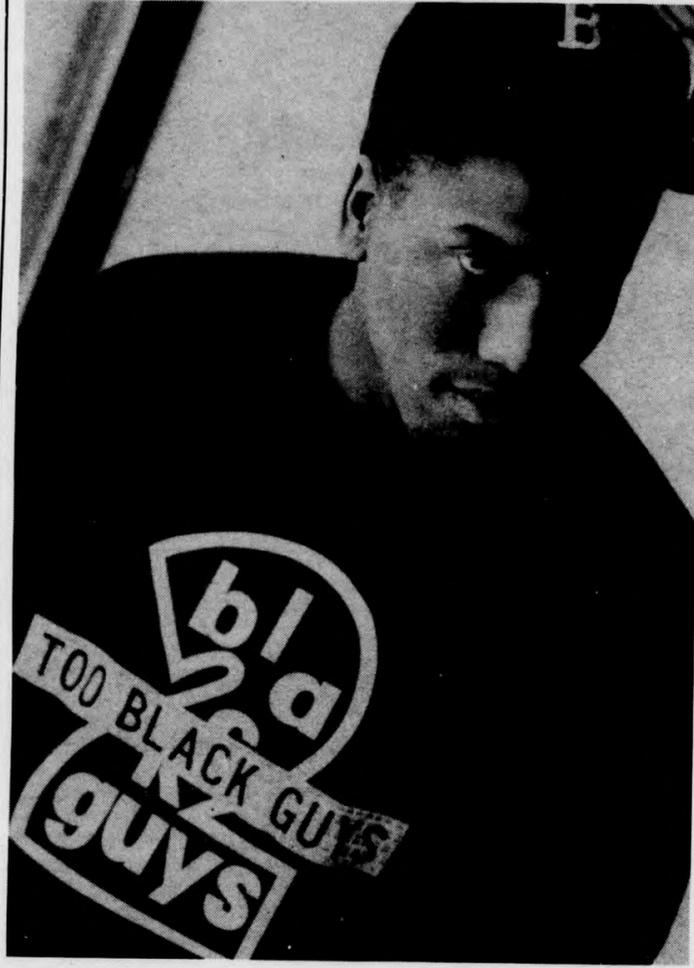
I see you talk-n' Teach  
but  
I can't hear a word you say.

Wayne Salmon

# BUSINESS

**"At the bottom of education, at the bottom of politics, even at the bottom of religion, there must be for our race economic independence."**  
 — Booker Washington

## Making Dollars with Conscious Style



by Toussaint Farrell

**C**heck this out: A t-shirt with the words "Coming to America," and a picture of a galley full of kidnapped Africans, soon to be slaves in the new world. Or this: An eerie portrait of Leonardo's Jesus, staring out to you, with sharp, deep blue eyes. On the back, "Hell No" in bold letters. Or try this on for size: On the front a Black man naked from the waist up, and on the back the ""and they counted our teeth...and they felt our testicles and they tested the luster or dullness of our skin and they sold us like slaves."

Definitely not your average t-shirts. A love for cultural relevance and a touch of irony is what makes **Too Black Guys** clothing line so unique. Basic t-shirts with conscious and thought provoking messages. Too black guys is more than a fad. The clear message in their clothing has earned them a large cult following among Black youth.

"I think people have been thinking about (these issues) all along, but its the first time their seeing it on a t-shirt, something that they are able to wear every day, something that can show other people how they feel," explained Linda, one of three young Black owners.

Catch phrases such as "Black owned and run", reflect an attitude

towards change. The owners of too black guys are acutely aware of their role and responsibility as part of the Black community.

Linda argues "I think that once you reach a certain level, it is your responsibility to give back. In turn the community should support (black business)."

Co-owner Adrian agrees, "The community is our base. This is more than just a business to us, its a way of uplifting ourselves. We're trying to gain the respect of the [Black] community. That has to be an objective for a lot of Black businesses."

Despite a recession and the wave of closures of retail chains, **Too Black guys** has managed to stay afloat.

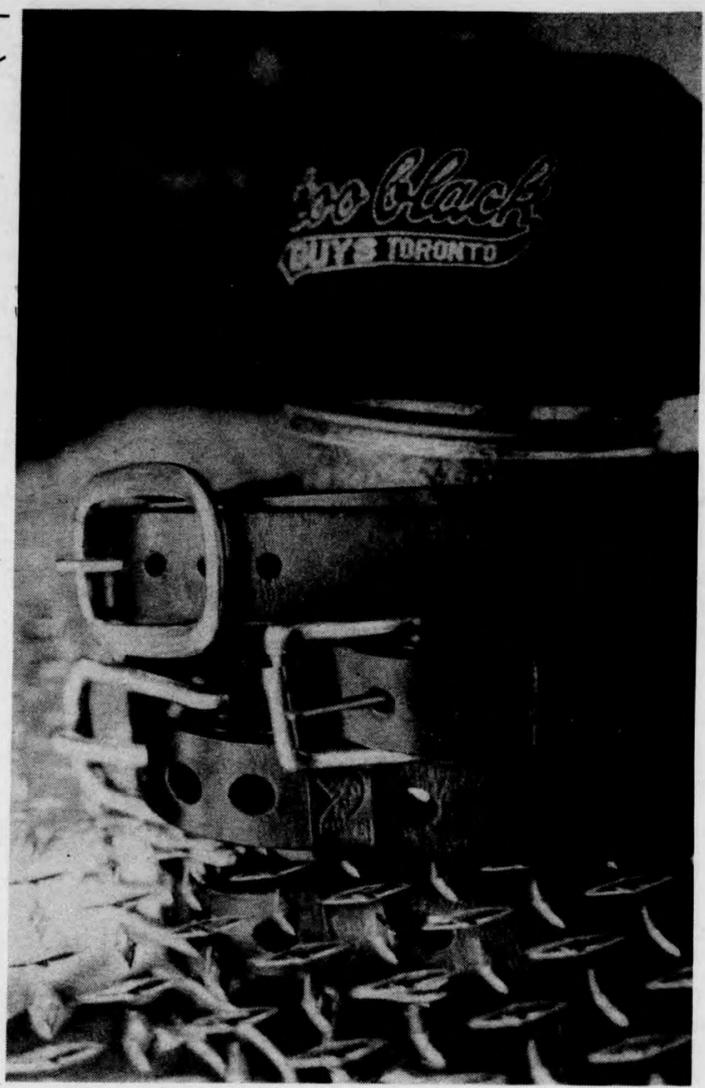
"People think we're making money, but good management has pulled us through this recession. That and support from part of the com-

munity, people who believe in what we are doing," explained Adrian.

Many people feel that by putting these controversial statements on t-shirts, Too Black Guys are highlighting a voice of resistance to the conditions faced by Black people globally, and very definitely locally.

"There are people who come on down and say well yeah, you guys are doing some really great stuff and I really appreciate what you're doing for the community.... You could look at it from an altruistic point of view, but if you look at it from a cold, hard business point of view, what were doing can be seen as making good business decisions and gaining the respect of the community."

Their store, with its steel flooring and funky music is located at three blocks north of Bloor on the side entrance of 968 Bathurst.



## Kevin David: Programmed for Success

By Robert Loudon

Kevin David is the owner of Kilroy Systems and software, a Computer consultation and sales business which he started when he was 16. I interviewed him about his experiences as a young African-Canadian entrepreneur.

**excalibur:** So, tell me a little about yourself.

**Kevin David (KD):** I am a 21 year old computer science student and owner of Kilroy Systems and Software.

**excalibur:** How long have you been running your business?

**KD:** For over 5 years. I started in 1986 when I was 16. Basically I was doing odd computer jobs like

writing DBase programs, training people in Wordperfect, Lotus etc.

**excalibur:** How have you expanded since then?

**KD:** I now sell personal computers, install Local Area Networks (LANs), provide training and support for inexperienced users and consulting, in all aspects of the computer industry, to major businesses.

**excalibur:** As a Black teenager how difficult was it for you to start your business?

**KD:** It wasn't difficult to start. But it was difficult to gain acceptance from some members of society. Some white people were really surprised that a Black person was running such a business and some of the prejudices came through in the way they reacted to my business card. My business card has what looks like a Black

person climbing over a keyboard but white people kept asking me "Why is this Black guy stealing the keyboard?" (He Laughs). Also, Black people assumed that since I was reasonably successful I must be some sort of sell-out.

**excalibur:** How did you finance your company?

**KD:** All I had to do was come up with the 52 dollars to register my business initially and since I wasn't selling anything at the time there was little financing to be done. As I started to expand I invested the money that I made into buying equipment, getting stock etc. Whenever I make money I invest it back in to the business.

**excalibur:** Have you found that over time you have been able to overcome negative perceptions and prejudice or is it still a major

problem?

**KD:** I always come across negative perceptions from at least half of the people I deal with. Usually it's just in the initial contact with the person that I see such a reaction. But once they clue-in that I'm not there to steal their car stereo (He Laughs) they realize that I'm just like everybody else.

**excalibur:** What would be your advice to other Blacks who are thinking of starting businesses?

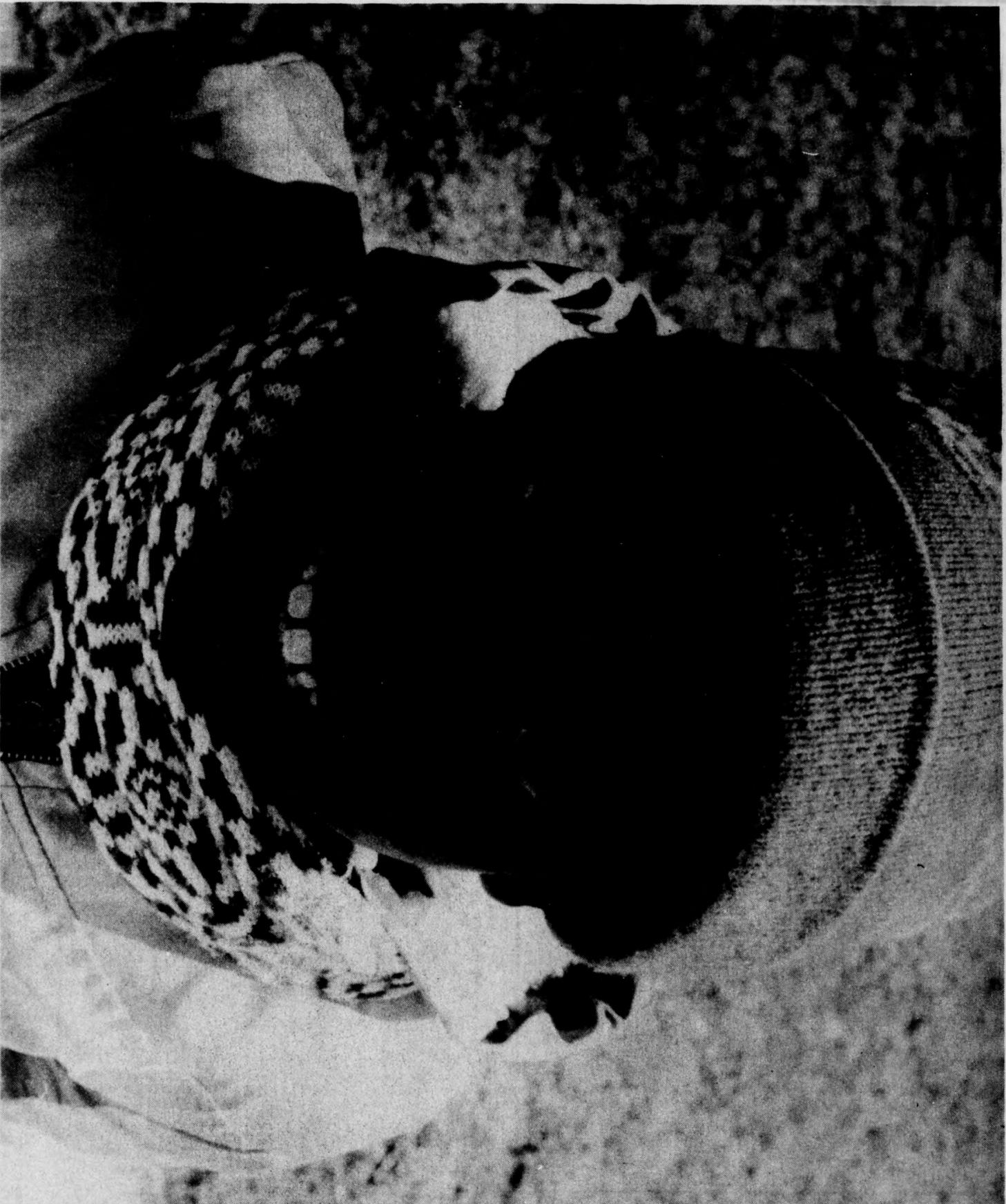
**KD:** My advice would be to find an area of expertise that they feel comfortable in and see if they can make a business out of it. The most successful businesses come from people who do something they already like.

**excalibur:** As a Black businessman do you think you have a special responsibility to the community and how have you been received?

**KD:** I used to think I had a special responsibility to the Black community, I went through the steps of advertising in community newspapers and I expected that there would be a positive response since I was the only Black computer dealer in the city but the response wasn't there. This has forced me to re-evaluate whether it is worth my while to be soliciting business from the Black community. It seems that my white clients are the ones keeping me in business when I would prefer that the Black community support its own.

**excalibur:** Thanks for speaking to us. Do you have any last words?

**KD:** The Chinese community has its money circulate six or seven times within the community before it leaves. Blacks have to start spending more money within the community if we are to uplift ourselves as a race.



## **TO MY DAUGHTER KAKUYA**

i have shabby dreams for you  
of some vague freedom  
i have never known.

Baby,  
i don't want you hungry or thirsty  
or out in the cold.  
And i don't want the frost  
to kill your fruit  
before it ripens.

i can see a sunny place—  
Life exploding green.  
i can see your bright, bronze skin  
at ease with all the flowers  
and the centipedes.

i can hear laughter,  
not grown from ridicule.  
And words, not prompted  
by ego or greed or jealousy.

And i can see a world  
where you,  
building and exploring,  
strong and fulfilled,  
will understand.  
And go beyond  
my little shabby dreams.

—assata shakur

# Afrikan History Month

## calender of events

f e b r u a r y 1 9 9 2

<p><b>1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harbourfront presents <i>Arrow</i> 8:00 pm Brigantine Room</li> <li>• U of T presents <i>Unity Jane</i> 92-665-4373</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OBHS presents <i>5th Annual BHM Brunch</i>; Guest Speaker Mr. Richard Barton; Honouring Dorothy Shadd Shreve, with Jazz by Archie Alleyne Trio Enoch Turner School House, 106 Trinity St. 11:30 am 867-9420</li> <li>• Classical Cabaret presents Jackie Richardson, Denis Simpson with Joe Sealy Trio George Ignatieff Theatre, 15 Devonshire Place 3:00 pm \$15, \$12 Seniors and Students 925-0284</li> </ul>	<p><b>monday 3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CYBE presents <i>BHM Official Opening with Dr. Bryan Walls and Ita Sadu Vaughan</i> Road Cl, 529 Vaughan Rd. 7:00 pm FREE</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Storytelling with R. Kaens-Douglas</i> Downsview Public Library, 2793 Keele St. Pre-register 1:30-2:15 pm FREE 395-5710</li> <li>• Jones And Jones presents <i>BHM Reggae Jam</i> featuring CULTURE The Great Hall, 1087 Queen St. West 10:00 pm \$20 advance 588-9440</li> </ul>	<p><b>5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Andrew Donaldson</i> Bathurst Heights Public Library, 3170 Bathurst St. Pre-register 2:00-3:00 pm FREE 395-5440</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Visual Explosion (presentation of Caribbean artists)</i> York Woods Public Library Pre-register 1:30-3:15 pm FREE 395-5980</li> <li>• <i>Art Show with J. Butterfield, A. Seitu and D. Moore</i> Toronto City Hall—Rotunda Through to 14th 458-0452</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WISA/ACSA presents "<i>Christopher Columbus and What He Means To The Black Community</i>" International Students Centre, U of T 8:00 pm FREE 240-8501</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Many Rivers to Cross: African-Canadian Experience</i> Flemingdon Park Community Library 29 St. Dennis Drive Pre-registration 6:30-7:30 pm FREE 395-5820</li> </ul>	<p><b>7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Art Show featuring Joan Butterfield and Ato Seitu</i> OISE 252 Bloor Ave. Through to 26th 458-0452</li> </ul>	<p><b>8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harbourfront presents <i>Kaleidoscope Crafts</i> The Lookout 11:30-4:30 pm 973-3000</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Caribbean Showcase</i> Black Creek Library 2141 Jane St. 2:00-3:30 pm 395-5470</li> </ul>	<p><b>9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harbourfront presents <i>Lillian Allen and The Kids Funk Band</i> Walter's Edge Cafe 2:00 pm 973-3000</li> <li>• <i>Kaleidoscope Crafts</i> The Lookout 11:30-4:30 973-3000</li> </ul>	<p><b>monday 10</b></p>
<p><b>11</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACSA/WISA presenta <i>Forum on Black Women (Women Only)</i> International Students Centre, 33 St. George St.</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Visual Explosion (presentation of Caribbean Artists)</i> Flemingdon Park Community Library 6:30-7:30 pm FREE 395-5820</li> <li>• ROM presents <i>Films: Black Mother, Black Daughter, Older, Stronger, Wiser</i> ROM, 100 Queen's Park 12:00 pm FREE 586-5834</li> </ul>	<p><b>12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Many Rivers To Cross: African Canadian Experience</i> York Woods Public Library Pre-register 1:30-3:15 pm FREE 395-5980</li> </ul>	<p><b>13</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYPL presents <i>It's A Small World After All: with Dick Lochan</i> Bridlewood Mall 1:30 pm FREE 396-8960</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Visual Explosion</i> Black Creek Public Library Pre-register 1:30-3:30 pm FREE 395-5470</li> <li>• EPLB presents <i>Itah Sadu</i> Albion Library, 1515 Albion Rd. 7:00 pm FREE 394-5176</li> </ul>	<p><b>14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OBHS presents <i>Revisiting Columbus</i> Keynote by Dr. Joy Gleason Carew Toronto Board of Education, 155 College St. \$10 (Members, Students and Seniors, \$15 Others) 1st day 867-9420</li> </ul>	<p><b>15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OBHS presents <i>Revisiting Columbus with Dr. Fred Case, Mr. Asselin Charles and Mr. Lennox Farrell</i> Toronto Board of Education, 155 College St. 2nd day 867-9420</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Caribbean Rhythms and Songs with Dick Smith</i> Central Library Auditorium, 5120 Yonge St. 3:00-4:00 pm 395-5630</li> <li>• NYPL presents "<i>Talking Cloth</i>" and <i>South African Cuisine</i> Pre-register York Woods Library, 1785 Finch Ave.</li> </ul>
<p><b>16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CKLN (88.1 fm) presents <i>UHURU SASA '92: Special 15-hour broadcast</i></li> <li>• Harbourfront presents <i>Diana Braithwaite</i> Water's Edge Cafe 2:00 pm</li> <li>• <i>Forum on Black Political Power with Zanana Akande, Dickson Eyoh, Dr. D.K. Duncan and Enid Lee</i> 1:30 pm FREE 973-3000</li> <li>• CKLN (88.1 fm) presents <i>Live from The Real Jerk Pit: UHURU JAMMI!</i> 10:00 pm \$8 advance 585-1477</li> </ul>	<p><b>monday 17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYPL presents <i>The Faith and Evolution of Black Muslims</i> Pre-register York Woods Public Library 1:30-3:00 pm FREE 395-5980</li> </ul>	<p><b>19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JBCF presents "<i>Sixty Percent (Play)</i>" 7:30 pm 656-4317</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Steel Pan Music for Kids</i> Flemingdon Park Community Library, 29 St. Dennis Dr. 4:00-6:00 pm 395-5820</li> <li>• EPLB presents <i>Clifton Joseph</i> Albion Library, 1515 Albion Rd. 7:00 pm Pre-register FREE 394-5170</li> </ul>	<p><b>20</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TPL presents "<i>Looking at African Music with Norman Otis Richmond</i> Parkdale Public Library, 1303 Queen St. W 7:00 pm FREE 393-7686</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>Many Rivers To Cross</i> York Woods Public Library Pre-register 1:30-3:15 pm FREE 395-5980</li> <li>• NYPL presents <i>The Faith and Evolution of Black Muslims</i> Flemingdon Park Community Library, 29 St. Dennis Dr. 6:30-7:30 pm Pre-register 395-5820</li> </ul>
<p><b>21</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACCC presents <i>Evening of Celebration</i> including poetry, songs etc. Eastern HS of Comm., 16 Phin Ave. 7:00 pm FREE 393-0241</li> </ul>	<p><b>22</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JCA presents <i>BHM Celebration Events</i> Jamaican Canadian Centre, 1621 Dupont 1:00 pm FREE 535-4476</li> <li>• United Acheivers presents "<i>The Black Experience Within Canadian Mosaic</i>" with Judge Stanley Grizzle, Emerita Emerencia Brampton Four Corners Library, 65 Queen St. East \$5 Adults, \$3 Seniors and Students 6:00 pm 450-5840</li> </ul>	<p><b>23</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harbourfront presents <i>Dave's Dance Music</i> 2:00 pm 973-3000</li> <li>• MHSO presents "<i>The Evolution of Jazz</i>"—A narrated musical production Convocation Hall, U of T, 31 Kings College Circle 8:00 pm \$12.50-\$15 979-2973</li> </ul>	<p><b>monday 24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p>
<p><b>26</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACSA/WISA presents <i>Luncheon and Forum on "How Do I Know I'm Black"</i> International Students Centre, 33 St. George St. 240-8501</li> </ul>	<p><b>27</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earl Haig S.S. presents <i>Profiles in Science Information Session with Ontario Hydro representatives, Joseph Dadson</i> E.H.S.S., 100 Princess Ave. 12:00-2:00 pm FREE</li> </ul>	<p><b>28</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Secretariat presents <i>Education of Black Children</i> lecture with Dr. Asa Hilliard OISE, 252 Bloor St. West 7:30 pm 924-1104 or 424-1645</li> <li>• Roots International Arts Theatre presents "<i>Repatriation</i>" (Music, Dance and Drama Presentations) Through to March 1 266-5487</li> <li>• WISA/ASCA presents <i>Underground (A Play on Police Relations and The Black Community)</i> 924-2121</li> </ul>	<p><b>29</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U of T presents <i>A Cultural Show and Dance</i> 665-4373</li> <li>• ACSA (Erindale) presents <i>Variety Night</i> 569-1140</li> <li>• LMBC presents "<i>A Black Cultural Extravaganza</i>" \$10 Adults \$5 (12 under) Brockview Middle School, 4505 Jane St. 10:30 am 731-5763 or 665-4418</li> <li>• Black Secretariat presents "<i>Education of Black Children</i>" Lecture with Dr. Asa Hilliard New College 1:00 pm 924-1104 or 424-1645</li> </ul>	

