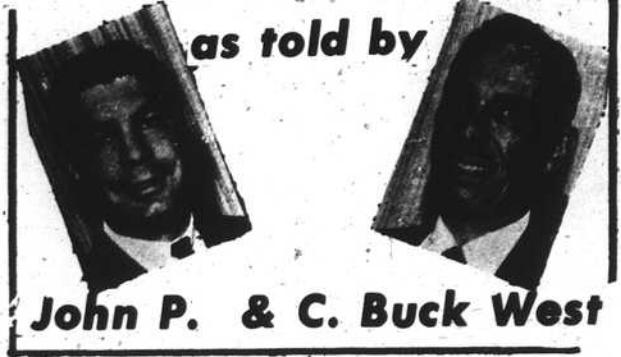


Hidden History

The Unsung Saga of the Black Man



as told by
John P. & C. Buck West

CLITUS

Black Cavalry General of Alexander the Great
(300 B.C.)

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, according to legend, is said to have died a young man, who brooded and drank himself to death because he had no more worlds to conquer. However, the writings of the ancient Greek and Roman chroniclers paint a different picture of circumstances leading to the death of Alexander.

Rogers has reconstructed the history of Alexander the Great and his Negro Cavalry General, Clitus. We quote from his text, "World's Great Men of Color" Vol. 1, pg. 39-41.

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"CLITUS, FOSTER-BROTHER of Alexander the Great and commander of Alexander's cavalry, was the son of Dropides and Lanice, the nurse of Alexander. Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and Curtius, writers of antiquity, speak of him as Clitus Niger--Niger being Latin for "Negro." In those days one's surname was often given to him because of his color or some physical characteristic. There were other Clituses in Alexander's army and fleet. In any case Alexander's having a Negro general was not extraordinary. A much later conqueror, Napoleon, had as his favorite cavalry leader, a Haitian Negro, the celebrated General Alexander Dumas.

"Clitus was many years older than Alexander and had been a general under Alexander's father, Philip of Macedon. When Alexander succeeded to the throne and started off for his conquests in Asia, Clitus went as his commander of cavalry and so distinguished himself that he was made king of Bactria.

"At the great battle of Arbela in which Darius, King of Persia, met the Greeks with 40,000 cavalry, 1,000,000 infantry, and 200 scythe-bearing chariots, Clitus saved the day by saving the life of Alexander.

"AT THE HEIGHT of the battle, Alexander, who was a conspicuous figure with his golden buckler and helmet's crest, and his plumes of unusual size and whiteness, was attacked by a score of the enemy among whom were two Persian generals, Rhoesaces and Spithradates. Alexander dodged Spithradates and struck at Rhoesaces with his spear, but the weapon snapped in two on the latter's breastplate and Alexander was compelled to draw his sword. 'But,' says Plutarch, 'while he was thus engaged with Rhoesaces, Spithradates rode up, raised himself on his horse, and with all his might came down with a barbarian battle-axe upon Alexander's helmet. Alexander's crest was broken off together with his plumes. Alexander's helmet could barely and with difficulty resist the blow, so that the edge of the battle-axe touched the topmost hair of his head. But while Spithradates was raising his arm for another stroke, Clitus, black Clitus, got the start of him and ran him through the body with his spear.'

"Alexander and Clitus had, nevertheless, sharp differences of opinion. Clitus was very devout and Spartan in his habits while Alexander was much the opposite and when in Asia, he saw Alexander adapting the luxurious style of living of the rich there, instead of adhering to the simpler, more healthful ways of his native land he was disturbed lest Alexander become as soft as the people he had conquered. Moreover, Alexander, who was surrounded by flatterers, was becoming too boastful. Clitus, out of his deep affection for him, reproached him for these defects and tried to change him. Alexander, resented this and a breach developed be-

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EDITORIAL

What Are We Going To Do About Our Children Who Are Already Trapped?

THAT SEGREGATION in any form is an evil and an injustice is an undeniable fact. Those of us who have been engaged in the never-ending struggle for equal rights, equal opportunity and equal justice know full well that defacto segregation in the school systems throughout the country is an insupportable evil and injustice, and yet, because of segregated housing patterns and economic factors, no one has, as yet, come up with a workable solution for this grave problem.

It is equally undeniable that, ideally, the time for integrating school children is at the Kindergarten level for reasons too obvious to go into here.

Dedicated as our efforts are to attain the ideal situation and adamant as we are in our determination to obtain the goal of complete integration in our nation's school systems, (as has been ordered by the Supreme Court of the Land,) we must realize that our objective has not yet been achieved and, more importantly, recognize our responsibility and obligation to our children who are already caught in the trap of defacto segregation--as parents, as community and civic workers and, above all, as Negro men and women.

Let's face up to it. If our children are not

tween the two.

"ONE DAY while Alexander was at Samarcand, a present of unusually fine and luscious Greek fruits arrived for him and he sent for Clitus to share it with him.

The messenger found Clitus at the temple, sacrificing to Dionysus, and when coming fresh from this shrine he saw Alexander at the banquet table intoxicated and surrounded by sycophants, he was deeply disturbed, but, nevertheless, drank the wine Alexander offered him.

"When Clitus had entered, the poets were chanting verses lauding Alexander above the gods. One of them now began to ridicule those generals of Alexander who had suffered defeats from the Persians and even to satirize Macedonian skill at arms. This highly displeased the Macedonian commanders but pleased Alexander, who, by this deflation of his own people, hoped to win over the conquered Asiatics to his support.

"The Macedonian commanders, however, not daring or wishing to offend Alexander, pretended to be pleased too. Clitus, alone, dared to differ. He said, 'The defeated Macedonian generals are far superior to those who are mocking them. It is not well, Oh Alexander, that Macedonians should be ridiculed and made to appear lower than the barbarians.'

"ALEXANDER LAUGHED in scorn and said sarcastically, 'Do not the Greeks appear to walk about among the Macedonians like gods among wild beasts.'

"Clitus, raising his voice, replied tartly, 'Alexander has permitted himself to be led astray by flatterers until now he deems himself not only superior to his father Philip, but also greater than the gods.'

"'You must not forget, Oh Alexander,' Clitus continued, 'that the Macedonian army has done its part in making you master of the world. You presume yourself to be superior to Castor and Pollux. Aye, even to Hercules. But mortals cannot be compared with the gods.'

"Stung to the quick, Alexander reached for his sword, but someone had hidden it. He shouted scornfully: 'You are pleading your cause, Clitus. You are giving cowardice the name of misfortune.'

"'Coward!' shouted Clitus in a rage. He stretched out his right arm. 'Was it not this cowardice of mine that saved you when you were already turning your back upon Spithradates?'

"'Base fellow!' screamed Alexander. Seizing an apple, he threw it at Clitus. 'Dost thou think to speak thus at all times of me and to raise antagonistic factions among the Macedonians?'

"'Happy are the dead,' flung back Clitus, 'they cannot see your injustices and cannot see

achieving in the schools they attend comparable to the total District norm; if the behavior of our children does not favorably compare with the District norm; if our children lack the motivation and desire to achieve and to learn that the middle class, upper class or poor white children display--where does the blame really belong?

WE HAVE BEEN extremely vocal about the injustices and indignities to which we have been subjected by the white man--We have screamed loud and clear about discrimination, fancied and real; We have demonstrated to the world that we no longer will accept second class citizenship; We have sat in, laid in, swam in, burned in until there is no question or doubt in anyone's mind that we know our rights and intend to have them.

We don't decry this "March to Freedom" and struggle for equal status, but we do appeal to every Negro man and woman, parent or not, to allocate some time, energy, loving care, and thought to our Negro children who are already caught in the trap. What will all our efforts mean if, when the door of equal opportunity has been opened wide to all, regardless of race, religion or creed, if our children are not qualified to take advantage of that open door of opportunity?

The Great Society is moving, no matter how
(See EDITORIAL, page 10)

Macedonians being flogged by Median whips with Persians interceding for them.'

"In high wrath, Alexander bade his trumpeter sound the alarm for his guards. When the man hesitated, Alexander knocked him down, declaring that he found himself reduced to the same position as Darius when he was led about under arrest by Bessus. 'I no longer possess the name of king,' he shouted.

"Springing to his feet, Alexander seized a javelin and was about to throw it at Clitus when friends of the two stepped in between them. Clitus was led out but consumed with rage, he broke away and rushed back into the hall, shouting, 'Alas, in Hellas, what an evil government!'

"ALEXANDER BESIDE himself with rage, threw the javelin. It struck Clitus, piercing his heart. Alexander, instantly repenting what he had done, rushed over to Clitus, picked him up and begged him to speak. Then realizing that he had killed his best friend, he pulled out the weapon and aimed it at his own throat but a guard wrenched it out of his hand in time.

"Alexander, in remorse, took to his couch and wept aloud, vainly calling on Clitus to return. How would he be able ever to face Lanice again, who had reared him and given her sons to fight for him, all of whom, except Clitus had been killed in battle. Now with his own hand he had wantonly killed Clitus, too.

"For three days, he refused to touch food and drink, calling himself a murderer and saying that he wanted to die. The Macedonian army passed a resolution declaring that Clitus had been justly slain. But this formal gesture did not ease Alexander's conscience, and he would not be consoled.

"ALEXANDER FINALLY drank himself to death, it is said, because he had no more worlds to conquer, but might not remorse at having slain his best friend be the greater reason?'

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