

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

THE VIRUS OF RACISM SPREADS TO CHILDREN

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

No one is born a racist. No one is born with racial hatred and fear. Racism is a "social virus." In other words racism is generated and perpetuated by individuals, groups and social institutions that engender a "social conditioning" which nurtures racial hatred and fears into the fabric of society.

Children are exposed to this dangerous virus at an early age and as a consequence become either victims or perpetrators.

A recent racial attack near the Whalen Intermediate School in Bronx, New York is but another shameful example of how racism infects growing numbers of children in the nation. Two African American children attempting to walk to school were attacked by a group of white male children.

The African American youth were brother and sister, age 14 and 12 respectively. The attack occurred at 8:00 a.m. in full public view on Boston Road only a block from the school. The group of white male youth approached the African American youth for the rear screaming, "Niggers, niggers, niggers." They first grabbed the little girl, beat her and then cut her hair with a box cutter knife.

Then the African American male was attacked and punched to the ground. His sister was then thrown down beside him and the group robbed them of their lunch money. The attackers then began to spray white paint in the face and hair of the two beaten children shouting, "You blacks....are turning white today."

Thanks to the efforts of an unidentified passing motorist, the attackers were chased away. The physical and psychological trauma that this brother and sister have had to endure is cause for moral outrage. Yet, we know that this attack is not an isolated incident. From our perspective, as we monitor these kinds of incidents as they occur in nearly every sector of the nation, we find a rising national trend where African American, Hispanic American, Asian American and Native American children are the victims of this type of racial violence.

We stand with New York City Mayor David N. Dinkins in his quick denunciation of this latest racial attack. Mayor Dinkins stated emphatically, "We will

leave no stone unturned to find those responsible for such a dastardly deed."

One of the problems that contributes to the prevalence of racial violence in the United States is the multiple standards of justice in the judicial systems

in dealing with this type of crime. Very rarely does the court system impose stiff penalties against the perpetrators of racial violence, even when physical harm is involved.

There are some who ask, why do we persist in raising these

issues? It is not because we prefer to, but it is because we have a responsibility to expose the painful realities of America's race problem in order to encourage more effective strategies to find a cure for this systemic disease. As a society we can ill

afford to deny the gravity of the problem of racism. The children and youth of the nation deserve a better chance for a life free from racial discrimination and hatred.

In the wake of once again celebrating the birthday and

ministry of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., there is no better way to salute the legacy of Dr. King than for us all to embrace our children and all children with a greater commitment to arrest and rid the world of the virus of racism.

LVABSE SEEKS SUPPORT FOR CAUSE

By Gloria Brooks-Izard

Everyday there is a cause. Each one of us must decide which cause is just and what we can do to aide this cause. For several days I contemplated what to write about this cause. Initially, I was distraught by the apathy of our community. I then realized there would not be a story, if not for the courageous actions of this group. There was a decision made, a cause found to be just, and a group of individuals willing to join the struggle.

The Las Vegas Alliance of Black Educators (LVABSE) should be applauded and assisted in their efforts to bring equity into the Clark County School District. Las Vegas has had a progressive attitude toward public education. However, in the past decade or so there has been a "slippage", a trend moving back into the madness prior to 1960. In spring of 1989 the reorganization of the district saw the purging of African-American educators from key positions. It was a signal to LVABSE to take a stand. They filed a lawsuit in May 1989. The revised filing in February of 1990 substantially expanded the issues to be heard in the Federal District Court. Legal representation for LVABSE included Thomas I. Atkins, former General Counsel of the National NAACP; Peter Graham Cohn, a former member of the NAACP's

National Board of Directors; James Hardiman, has national litigation experience in school desegregation cases; and James Oran Porter, a local attorney.

"Specifically, the revised complaint submitted in February 1990 contends that the Board of Trustees and its Superintendent in the reorganization have taken the following racially discriminatory actions to create and maintain systemwide racial segregation designed to benefit white students by placing the primary burden on black students:

1. Manipulating school attendance zones and feeder patterns to make student enrollments racially segregated;
2. Choosing sites for school construction and additions in a manner which increases racial segregation;
3. Deliberately utilizing grade structures which create or maintain racial segregation;
4. Practicing racial discrimination in hiring, assigning, promoting, and demoting administrators, teachers, and school support staff; and
5. Failing or refusing to develop or select classroom textbook and other curricular material which accurately reflect the role played by blacks in this country." (This information is taken directly from the lawsuit statement provided by Dr. Linda

Young, president of the Las Vegas Alliance of Black School Educators.) The lawsuit was certified as a Class Action Lawsuit, representing over 17,000 Black students able to attend school in Clark County. Unfortunately, on October 31, 1991, the lawsuit was dismissed by Judge Lloyd George for summary judgement file by the Clark County School District. Lawyers representing LVABSE filed an appeal on November 1, 1991 to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, Cali-

fornia. The case will be heard in the Circuit court during the summer of 1992.

This lawsuit effects everyone who is reading this article. Education is the key for all of us. It makes a profound difference in the world community of today. Each and every student in the Clark County School District deserves to have a quality education. It is necessary and it is imperative. It is also time that we as a community incorporate this cause. It takes dedication, time, and money to fight an in-

justice. It especially takes money. Any amount of time and/or money spent is a small price to pay since the cause in one way or another touches all of us. LVABSE needs our support. Our future depends on it.

Contributions can be mailed to: Legal Defense Fund Attention: Linda Young 530 Oakey Blvd. Las Vegas, NV 89104 Today let us allow the education of youth be the cause which we find just. Let it also be the cause we support!!



If all your children deserved to go to college, but you could only send one, how would you choose?

A better question is why should you have to choose? Why shouldn't every bright, hard-working kid get a chance to fulfill his or her dreams?

That's why your donation to the United Negro College Fund is so important. As the most experienced source in providing general operating support for historically black colleges, we've enabled thousands of deserving students to get a quality education.

But there are still thousands who urgently need your support. How can we possibly say yes to one and no to another? Send your donation to: UNCF, 500 E. 62nd St., New York, NY 10021.

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