

"ALONG THE COLOR LINE"

HOMOPHOBIA: THE STRUGGLE FOR GAY RIGHTS

By Dr. Manning Marable

"Homophobia" is the fear, prejudice and hatred of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals, and the patterns of violence, oppression and discrimination used to perpetuate their unequal status within society.

There are many "justifications" which are used for homophobia. One of the most common is the assertion that homosexuality is a "life-style choice", or a merely "perverse" form of sexual behavior, rather than viewing gays and lesbians as an oppressed minority. In this interpretation, homosexuality is something like having a tan: sometimes you have it, like on vacations or in the summers, and sometimes you don't.

Although homosexuality as a form of human behavior is as old as humankind, orthodox science has perceived lesbians and gay men with the same prejudices as the larger society. Until two decades ago, the American Psychiatric Association listed "homosexuality" as a type of disease or mental disorder. It was only several years ago that serious scholarship focused on the possible biological and genetic differences which separate heterosexuals and homosexuals.

One critical study was produced in 1993 by Northwestern University psychologist J. Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard of Boston University School of Medicine. Pillard located 147

lesbians, including 115 who had twin sisters and 32 who had adoptive sisters. Each of these 147 pairs of sisters were raised in the same households. Bailey and Pillard then subdivided the women into three sets: identical twins, fraternal twins, and genetically unrelated sisters. The identical twins of course had the identical genetic composition, whereas the fraternal twins had the same genetic inheritance of ordinary siblings. Bailey and Pillard discovered that 48 percent of the lesbian or bisexual identical twin subjects had a gay twin; 16 percent of the fraternal twin subjects had a gay twin sister; but only 6 percent of the lesbian and bisexual subjects had adoptive sisters who were

also lesbians. Only 5 percent of the women's brothers were gay.

This study strongly implies that homosexuality is partially a matter of biology and genetic inheritance, as well as to some extent the product of environment, cultural identity and socialization.

A similar study by Bailey and Pillard among gay men in 1991 was strikingly similar in its results. Instances in which both were homosexuals were 52 percent for identical twins, 22 percent for fraternal twins, and 10 percent for adoptive brothers.

Bailey and Pillard's studies have immediate and profound implications for the current debate over gays and lesbians in the U.S. military, as well as the anti-gay legislation approved in Colorado and Oregon. If being lesbian or gay is at least partially due to involuntary inheritance—like the color of a person's skin—then much of the rationale for the conservative's and evangelical Christian's attacks against homosexuals would be undermined. To discriminate against a person for having characteristics for which she or he has no direct control is irrational and illogical. Part of the liberal justification for the modern Civil Rights Movement a generation ago was waged on this argument. It is both unfair and antidemocratic to stigmatize people of African descent for being born black.

The problem with this liberal thesis is that it might seriously underestimate the factors of hatred and violence which fuel the recreation against homosexuals. There is a real danger in creating fixed biological casts of "homosexuals" and "heterosexuals", which could be translated into permanent political

hierarches of "oppressed" and oppressors". In a conservative political environment, a reactionary government might even try launching a scientific campaign to isolate the genetic differences between gays and straights, in order to find a "cure for homosexuality."

All of us pay the price for homophobia. Consider the federal government's relative inactivity in combating the AIDS epidemic, which conservatives still characterize as a "gay plague." The number of AIDS cases increases by over 50,000 annually. The total number of AIDS cases increased by 100 percent from the end of 1989 to September, 1992. Yet the federal budget for AIDS/HIV related research in 1989-1992 grew by only one-third. Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, coordinator of AIDS research for the National Institutes of Health, estimates that "fewer than a third" of all "worthy" projects combating AIDS are currently funded. In fiscal year 1992, the U.S. government spent more than 3 times the amount of



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money on "Star Wars" military research (\$4.2 billion) than on all AIDS research (\$1.2 billion). In 1992, the U.S. spent more than five times the amount to farmers for subsidies (\$6.9 billion) — payments for not growing crops — than for all AIDS research. The real price for homophobia is hundreds of thousands of victims every year.

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NAARPR REPORT

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clear to those who foot the bills for these new shows, that if the best that they can do is "In Living Color" (where the beauty of African Americans is on a weekly basis maligned and ridiculed), then we will make it clear to the Africans who participate in these shows, that an entire season based on the comedic talents of Africans is inappropriate. They

NEYLAND

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Meharry Medical College and Graduate in 1971; 1972 would culminate with the end of her internship in Long Beach, California with Long Beach Memorial Children's Hospital. She feels her love of children inspired her to pursue the field of Pediatric Medicine. It is this deep concern for our children and those less fortunate that warrants special recognition. For twenty years, Dr. Neyland has cared for the children of Southern Nevada as

too must begin to demand that there be a more broadly represented base of African life in this country. There's nothing wrong with comedy. Comedy is fine, but the thing that set Amos and Andy apart and made it extremely destructive and inappropriate is the fact that when one compares it with shows, such as Roc, it is clear that Amos and Andy have no redeeming hu-

man qualities, whereas in Bebe's Kids, which the late Robin Harris was responsible for, there are still redeeming human qualities of these children that African's have concern for their children and love for their mates. Either the motion picture and television industry on their own or we force them to change. As Malcolm said that includes... By whatever means are necessary to get them to understand that what they are doing is inappropriate.

La Lucha Continua! The Struggle Continues!

well as working towards a better (See Neyland, Page 11)

RAY WILLIS REPORT

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Who cares? What difference does it make?

Just look at the evidence around you. How often have you seen people of apparent mixed race heritage who lead White lives? There are many people who fall into this category who either pass for White or who are accepted as equals

by the White community. But from a visual standpoint, when you look at them, there's a tell-tell sign that they are of mixed race ancestry.

In America today, people of mixed race ancestry are being accepted as White in greater numbers than ever before.

Slowly but surely, the whole truth begins to emerge.

NOTES FROM THE SCHOOL OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Teach a boy and you educate a man. Teach a girl and you educate a nation. Such simple words but they embody a powerful meaning. It should be no secret by now that the woman was chosen by the creator to be the porter through which life passes and with that she bears a great responsibility for the fruit that she bears represents the survival of her people.

If the woman, the mother's knowledge of self is poor, inadequate, incorrect if her self esteem and pride is low, if her self hatred is overwhelming then she will pass this on to her children through the natural mothering process. These children who represent the future will, in turn, grow up internalizing feelings of self hate, low self esteem and pride and they will run from knowledge of self.

This all helps to perpetuate the vicious cycles of self denial, self debasement, self hatred that infects most African. It is mental genocide for Africans to grow up believing they have done nothing worthwhile or contributed nothing to the world. We are not The White Mans Burden.

Unfortunately for the African we have adopted too many European ways. One aspect in particular the debasement of women has lead us to forget that through teaching a girl you educate a nation. The African in America now regards his woman as a beast of burden, a commodity to be acquired or a mission to be accomplished. We have totally lost sight of the fact that she is the mother of civilization and as such is due the utmost respect. She must be given her 'props'.

If the queen mother has a strong knowledge of self, if she knows her powerful role in African society, if she understands the hostile forces that comprise against her then she will be better equipped to prepare her children to face those forces.

Queens you must demand of your kings that they give the respect that the mother of civilization deserves. You must demand of yourselves that you carry yourselves in such a manner that your beauty, your strength, your greatness can not be denied. When the queen and her king live and work in peace and harmony there is nothing that the African genius cannot accomplish.

We must continue to teach our boys so that we have educated men but we must teach our girls so that we can build, fortify and maintain a strong African nation. Remember, the fruit never falls far from the tree. Until next week this has been the Minister of Information. Hotep!

HARRIS

Cartoon titled 'POINTS TO PONDER #3 BY PROFESSOR HARRIS'. It features a central map of Africa and several panels with text and illustrations. The text includes: 'SOUTH AFRICA, EVEN WITH ITS RACIST AND VIOLENT SOCIETY— WILL ELECT A BLACK PRESIDENT LONG BEFORE WE WILL!', 'IM SORRY... WE DON'T USUALLY GIVE LOANS TO WHITE PEOPLE... NOTHING PERSONAL...', 'WHAT ETHNIC COMMUNITY WOULD WANT ANOTHER PEOPLE TO CONTROL ALL THE COMMERCE AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS?', '— 1860's WHY WOULD ANY BLACK MAN WANT TO BE A DEMOCRAT?', and '— 1990's WHY WOULD ANY BLACK MAN WANT TO BE A REPUBLICAN?'. The cartoon is signed 'HARRIS © 1993' and ends with '\* SO WHY DO WE?'.