

Reparations issue returns to international spotlight

By Dora Muhammad
Special to Sentinel-Voice
CHICAGO (NNPA)—

"Who are the legitimate targets, dead and alive, of the reparations movement?" asked Bob Brown, a researcher at the Kwame Ture Work Study Institute. "How can we seriously talk about taking on multinational corporations and not be able to walk into a room and identify who did what?" he continued, speaking during the July 26 reparations meeting held in Chicago.

Called by Conrad Worrill, national chairman of the National Black United Front, and convened and hosted by the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, the summit was a historic step towards forging unity within the movement and was attended by representatives of various umbrella religious and political organizations.

Along with these public figures sat grassroots organizers who have proven to be a pivotal force behind the scenes—such as Brown, who demonstrated in his presentation that research is a vital element in the movement.

Family genealogies must be uncovered in order to iden-



(Right) Min. Louis Farrakhan seated next to Dr. Conrad Worrill. (Above) Delegates considered this summit the embryonic stage of an international reparations congress.

tify accurately personal connections to slavery, but careful research allows for a proper determination of who has to pay reparations.

According to Brown, referencing figures from the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), this determination begins with the British monarchs who accumulated 28 percent of the nation's wealth from the early trans-Atlantic slave trade. He also pointed to the first stages of the criminal enterprise of slavery with the Portuguese involvement in the sugar trade at Cape Verde in 1441.

"The sickness of the West

can be traced to European greed," explained Andrew Thompson of the Kemetec Institute, "and social, economic and cultural surgery is necessary to repair the damages."

It is this multi-faceted repair that lies at the root of the movement of reparations, and the demand coming from within America echoes those who have suffered similarly in Africa and the Caribbean. In fact, the road to reparations involves the retracing of the collective footprints of suffering within the Diaspora.

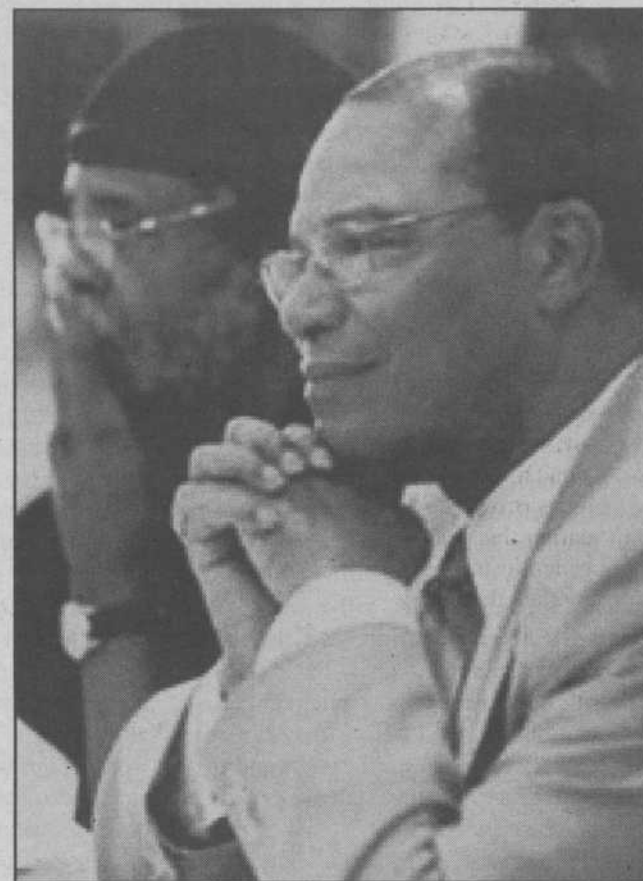
Since the slave enterprise was based on an international network, it is critical that the call for reparations be heard

on an international level, says Roger Wareham, an attorney who represents the lead New York plaintiff in a class action lawsuit filed against corporations that profited from the slave trade.

"As much as the United States wants to play like a lone ranger, they are affected by what goes on in the world. Although the United States is resisting it, someday soon the United States is going to be held accountable within the international arena under international law for its crimes against humanity," Wareham told The Final Call.

As the international secretariat for the December 12th Movement, Wareham explained that the group follows within strong adherence to a position raised by Malcolm X—that the issues of Black people must be brought to the international scene, because fighting for justice within U.S. courts is a no-win situation since the rules are set and changed to the benefit of those who oppress Black people.

"The international arena has a higher standard," he continued, "It's another way of forcing the issue of reparations and there are allies



within the international arena who support what we do. Instead of becoming isolated, we can develop our natural allies, which are African countries and the African Diaspora. We all suffer from forced under-development and the beneficiaries of that are the same countries. So,

therefore we have a commonality."

This commonality, he said, was reflected in the unity that developed during the United Nations World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa, in 2000, where the December 12th Movement are the same countries. So, (See *Reparations*, Page 14)

Black U.S. Capitol Police threaten second lawsuit

By Nisa Islam Muhammad
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA)—When Black U.S. Capitol Police filed a racial discrimination lawsuit against the U.S. Government in 2001, they expected to get justice. What they say they've gotten is retaliation and they're threatening a second class action suit.

The officers took their case to Capitol Hill recently for a press conference alleging the Capitol Police department's pattern of filing excessive and unfounded disciplinary charges against prominent members of the class action lawsuit, as well as a pattern of harassment, including exclusion of class members from the U.S. Capitol Complex and a series of auto tampering, break-ins and vandalism of class members' automobiles.

"We suspect that such conduct by the department smacks of retaliation against the class members and is designed to undermine the momentum of current settlement negotiations," class attorney Nathaniel D. Johnson told The Final Call.

In January, the government decided that it wanted to settle the original class

action suit, "Blackmon-Malloy v. United States Capitol Police Board." Meetings were scheduled to begin negotiations but have since stalled.

"The other side is not negotiating in good faith. Members of the class are being subjected to retaliatory conduct, including disproportionate punishment and discipline. Accordingly, we strongly believe that anyone initiating these frivolous and false charges should be held accountable and disciplined. We want the retaliatory conduct stopped," said Johnson. "We feel the managers are trying to stop the drive of the settlement negotiations. We want institutional reforms put in place, but there is a cadre of officers who want things to stay the same."

Chief Terrance W. Gainer of the Capitol Police was unavailable for comment.

Officer Larry A. Ikard, a member of the class action, spoke on behalf of the 358 Black members of the Capitol force.

"When will someone become accountable for the blatant acts of discrimination the African-American officers have had to endure throughout our tenure? How can we

be responsible for egregious acts committed against us?" he asked.

He told the audience about training opportunities he was denied and being subjected to a racially hostile work environment.

Officers Regina Bolden-Whitaker and Arnold Fields, also members of the class action suit, recently filed complaints with the Congressional Office of Compliance, challenging discriminatory and retaliatory disciplinary actions.

Officers Bolden-Whitaker and Fields will ask the Office of Compliance to consolidate and process their complaints as a class complaint on behalf of all Black officers sub-

jected to discriminatory and retaliatory discipline within the past two years, in anticipation of a possible filing in U.S. District Court once the administrative process has been completed.

Both officers were issued Form CP-535 Requests for Disciplinary Action—a sanction that becomes part of an officer's permanent record and can serve as the basis for termination for any future offense.

In Officer Bolden-Whitaker's case, she refused to sign a form without being given an explanation of what she was signing. Officer Field allegedly was punished because, in a break room full of officers at lunch, he did not

have his radio on, even though, he said, there is no clear requirement that officers keep their radios on while they are off duty during their uncompensated lunch breaks.

"Both officers now face possible future termination for these extremely petty charges brought by White commanders of the Capitol Police," said attorney Charles Day, who is also working on the case.

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) responded to the officers' complaints with a letter June 26 to Chief Gainer and members of the U.S. Capitol Police Board.

"We are incensed and embarrassed at having to deal with these same systemic issues of discrimination against African-American officers in our own U.S. Capitol Police force, now in the 21st century," the letter stated. "In

these uncertain times of terrorism, concern over homeland security and crises abroad, these police officers are entrusted with the responsibility of guarding and protecting us as Members of Congress, our staff and the Capitol buildings and grounds, as well as our constituents who visit the Capitol."

The letter, signed by the 39 members of the CBC, concluded by saying, "We strongly urge the Capitol Police Board to implement far-reaching non-monetary remedies and oversight measures to ensure that discrimination against the African-American officers ceases and we fully support the complete monetary settlement proposed in the letter to the U.S. Attorney's Office."

Nisa Islam Muhammad writes for The Final Call.

Redistricting

(Continued from Page 1)

trends show Texas should have more Republicans representing the state in Washington.

Democrats have a 17-15 majority in the Texas delegation now. Lawmakers failed to draw the lines themselves during the 2001 legislative session, so the current map was drawn by federal judges.

Efforts to address redistricting have failed three times this year for lack of Democratic Party cooperation.

Meanwhile, both sides faced a hearing Wednesday in Laredo on the Democrats' federal lawsuit that alleges that their constitutional rights as well as the Voting Rights Act have been violated through the redistricting.

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