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BLACK  
C o m m e n t a t o r**  
Commentary, analysis and investigations  
on issues affecting African Americans  
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**June 11, 2009 - Issue 328**

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**Schools, Prisons, Health Care Delivery, Politics,  
Employment, Business,  
Government, and Environment:  
None of Their Problems Will be Eliminated  
Until Racism and Racism + Sexism  
Are Fully Admitted and Fully Addressed  
Women of Color  
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Elected on a wave of hope for change and promises of reform, the Obama administration is leading a wave of national, state and local efforts to improve conditions and service delivery in schools, prisons, health care delivery, politics, employment, business, government and the environment. Unfortunately, though unstated and perhaps at least partly unconsciously, the overriding strategy is to proceed with "all deliberate speed," using acceptable innovators who can be trusted not to make "unacceptable" changes - those which would make elite people in positions of power uncomfortable. This continues the practice of persuading those in the suffering and dying grassroots / working class to keep waiting for their turn at bat - the turn which never comes because of the strengthening draconian measures which ensure the ongoing exploitation, rejection, retaliation and even extermination each time attempts are made by the people at the bottom to rise and overcome.

So for example, though the overwhelming majority of American citizens and medical professionals want a single payer-health-care-for-all, the Obama administration in capitulation to the insurance and pharmaceutical industries has blocked almost all single-payer advocates from being heard and has not included single payer advocates among those invited to the so-called "open," national discussions of the issue (except for the few with enough political clout of their own, like Congressman John Conyers

who forced his own inclusion). There is an incredible arrogance in all of this, underlying a clearly demonstrated belief by those currently and recently in power that the American public is ignorant, easily fooled and easily intimidated. This overly confident view was addressed by Abraham Lincoln: "[You may deceive all the people part of the time, and part of the people all the time, but not all the people all the time.](#)" Think of all the empires, monarchies, dictators, juntas, oligarchies and armies that have come to power and have tried to stay in power. They do not last any more than Shelley's Ozymandias.

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert ... Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which still survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Though disconnected from the masses, people of ruling classes seldom see the end coming. Their strategies ultimately fail because they are not smarter than the rest, even with their advantages and tools of the moment, and they are few in number. The core issues of life are unavoidable for any society to truly flourish and last.

There is not time and space enough to point out all of the possible examples of the inability to resolve any major social or government issue without addressing racism and the intersection of racism and sexism, so a few will have to suffice. To start: all despotic governments, whether elected or in power, or based on heredity, single rulers or oligarchies, maintain their control through propaganda which begins with basic vocabulary. Words like honor, duty, responsibility, accountability, morality, hero and traitor are uttered over and over again in a brainwashing technique that works by associating repeated lies and distortions with these words until their definitions are accepted without question and believed by many as truth by virtue of their repetition. The intentions of the propaganda, of course, only applies to the "governed" masses which, in the US, includes all but a few men and women of color and white women, but does not apply to the legally exempt governing class. So *honor* means obeying the ruling class without question; *duty* means being willing to sacrifice one's own resources, even life, to keep the ruling class in power with no expectation of reciprocity of any kind; *responsibility* means adhering to the rules set down by the ruling class to assure surrender of any hope of equitable circumstances; *accountability* refers to assuring that no morsel of resource or self worth is denied to the ruling class, along with the willingness to point out any other grassroots / working class people who violate these rules; *morality* refers to standards of behavior held out as deriving from a supreme being who is presented as the origin of the right to power of the ruling class; *hero* names the individual willing to betray, deceive, or deprive others in the grassroots

/ working class of any resource, possession or life desired by the ruling class, even at the price of one's own life; and, *traitor* identifies any person who disagrees in any way with the ruling class, especially any person seeking freedom, equality, justice or shared power.

There have been some in the governed masses, who appear to others outside the ruling class, to have higher status or positions which appear to be powerful. Their power is illusory in much the same way that overseers on slave plantations were. Their function is to deflect hostility from those really in power onto themselves so that the ruling class can control absolutely, yet feel beloved. Recent examples of this role can be seen in people like Ward Connerly, Clarence Thomas, Condoleezza Rice, Linda Chavez, Alberto Gonzales, who are known for their loyalty to those in control and for their willingness to disassociate themselves from the masses people of their own ethnic / cultural groups. This exemplifies one strategy by which the governing class maintains its grip on the masses by convincing some token individuals that they are part of the power elite, though they are not; and by holding up examples to the masses that there is a chance to become part of the ruling class - without mentioning the price to be paid. Tokens, however, like all others outside the ruling class are often subjected to tactics to make sure they stay in their places.

Two poignant examples of keeping people in their places are the treatment of Martha Stewart who was tried, convicted and sent to prison for allegedly lying to the FBI. By contrast, President Richard Nixon, who lied about authorizing criminal behavior, not only to the FBI but to the nation, an incomparably greater offense, was pardoned without having to face a single allegation or be subjected to any punishment. Martha Stewart, though white, is still female - a person of lower status in the US power hierarchy - no matter how smart or how much money she has. Indeed, it might be argued that she was put in her place because her intelligence was recognized and to neutralize any power she might try to exercise based on the acquisition of wealth.

A second example occurred when Oprah Winfrey remarked on her show, that she would not eat beef because of the ongoing concerns of many with the effects of mad cow disease, and was sued by the Beef Industry. This was a direct assault on the most powerful African American woman of all time, as well as one of the "richest people;" an opportunity to put her in her "place." However, it should be recognized that such Machiavellian endeavors are generally sinister in more than one way. The suit against Oprah Winfrey was also part of an effort to institute a judicial practice which had begun earlier in the United Kingdom - a scheme by which activists can be silenced from speaking truth by ruling them libelous even when their remarks are factual.

As reported in the Center for Media and Democracy PR Watchdog article, "Shut Up and Eat: The Beef Industry's Lawsuit Against Oprah Winfrey ... a British judge had already ruled that two environmental activists had committed 'McLibel' when they criticized the McDonald's restaurant chain for serving fatty, unhealthy foods, damaging the environment, paying low wages and mistreating animals. Although Justice Rodger Bell acknowledged that there was a factual basis for all of these criticisms, under Britain's reactionary libel law he ruled that activists Helen Steel and Dave Morris were guilty *anyway* and ordered them to pay \$96,000 in damages ... In the United States, meanwhile, the food industry is working overtime to enact British-style libel laws that make it easier to silence American activists and journalists."

The lawsuit against Oprah Winfrey and Howard Lyman of the Humane Society of the U.S. was the first effort of its kind in the United States where previously the legal system usually claimed to place high value on freedom of speech. In fact, freedom of speech is reserved for members of the ruling class and for people like Don Imus, Rush Limbaugh, Geraldine Ferraro, Dick Cheney, and sports teams with names like Red Skins that are offensive to Native Americans. Michigan State University said that MSU professor Indrek Wichman was protected by his right to free speech when he described Muslims as "brutal and uncivilized" and told Muslim students to go back to their homelands. Even the racial slurs attributed Britain's Prince Harry were excused. But in the case of African American Oprah Winfrey and activist Howard Lyman, this First Amendment right to freedom of speech was not viewed in the same manner. Instead, a focused effort was made to implement new "agricultural product disparagement laws" to make examples of them to silence critics of the food industry through intimidation.

Thirteen states to date have enacted "food disparagement" laws. Under previous laws, the food industry bore the burden of proof. In order to win a libel case, it had to prove that its critics were deliberately and knowingly circulating false information. Under the new laws, however, it wouldn't matter that Lyman believed in his statements, or even that he could produce scientists supporting his statements. The plan was to enable the industry to convict him of spreading "false information" if it could convince a jury that his statements on the Oprah show deviated from "reasonable and reliable scientific inquiry, facts, or data." In other words, truth would no longer be a defense to libel.

As in the cases of Martha Stewart and Oprah Winfrey, race and gender identities distinguish those with actual rights, such as the free speech utilized by the governing power elite, and those with the "phantom" rights of the governed. "Phantom" rights disappear at the pleasure of those in control, sort of like constitutional fine print written in disappearing ink. However, phantom rights are necessary to an unjust process. In order for unjust social systems to operate with the majority of people being ruthlessly ruled by a power elite, there must also be mechanisms through which the masses accept, participate in and perpetuate the unjust systems of control under which they live. Those under control must be persuaded that the system is basically good and that working within the system will achieve the desired outcomes of freedom, equality and justice. This keeps many people from fighting against the systems which actually imprison them.

Another strategy of control is to persuade the "governed" that they are inferior. The inferiority is communicated by portraying the "lower classes" as ugly, ignorant, uncultured, barbaric, animalistic, uneducated, crude, unreasoning, irresponsible, overly sexual, violent, noisy, rude, unreliable, criminalistic, naïve, simple and incapable of higher level thinking. These ideas infuse all aspects of art, education, communication, and employment. While art and media presentations show endless examples of these stereotypes applied to the grassroots / working class, especially to show women and men of color as valueless, the ruling class is reinforced in its belief in its own superiority, while the victims of the stereotypes are led to believe that they are looking at mirrors and not at distortions created by the real social deviants - those whose positive sense of self depends on the destruction of the self esteem of others.

Why is it important to understand these pieces of history? Because although truth is the

counter to propaganda, it cannot help if it is not known. Despite the easy access to almost unlimited information via the Internet, more and more people have been conditioned to rely on a few sound bites as sufficient knowledge. Tragically, the majority no longer read books, newspapers and magazines which generate reflective thinking. Neither do most people even take the time to visit an Internet fraud site to see if preposterous statements in an email from an unknown person are part of a scam. Instead, the scams are repeated and over and over and lead people to give out information like bank account numbers in the belief that millions of dollars will be deposited into their accounts by strangers in Nigeria or China or some unknown European country. Thus, identity thieves are assisted by their victims whose bank accounts are robbed by electronic debits and credit card are charged to their maximums.

Another of the many underlying assertions inherent in the propaganda utilized by the power elite to maintain power is the idea that the "have-nots" lack inspiration. The "haves," who enjoy adulation, engage in a pretense of helping the "have-nots" by *inspiring* them. The "haves" love this activity because it doesn't cost anything significant in terms of time, commitment or resources. Nor does providing "inspiration" require truth or integrity. All that is needed is for the haves to lecture the "have-nots" on how to *succeed* in education, careers and life. The "haves" tell the "have-nots" about the value of getting an education and of hard work. This makes the "haves" feel good about themselves as they buy into their own propaganda that they are helping the downtrodden "have-nots." Of course, the "haves" do not have to have education to get ahead because they have other "haves" who can open doors for them, buy their degrees / jobs for them, if necessary, based on their membership in the "in-group" and no amount of education, intelligence, skill, experience or talent can provide the same opportunities to the "have-nots." When the "have-nots" believe the propaganda of the "haves," the have-nots blame themselves for not being able to get more degrees or better jobs or higher incomes. The "tokens" who work on behalf of the "haves" reinforce the notion that the "have-nots" are failures and attack other "have-nots" who resist being controlled and refuse to capitulate to domination. It is a brutal system which begins at birth and conditions many "have-nots" to accept a modern, defeated, slave-like state of mind.

Recently, important political leaders, and those associated with them who claim to be social leaders, have been lecturing men of color on how to be "responsible" fathers while failing to consider or address in any way the centuries of racism that have deprived men of color of education, employment, freedom and dignity. This is like attacking a man and rendering him blind, deaf and without arms and legs, and without access to education, employment, food and shelter, then criticizing him for not going to school, having a job, being a good parent and citizen and calling him weak for being depressed. Women of color are more often marginalized to the level of invisibility without recognition of their humanity or existence. To assert that such people need to be inspired would be laughable if not so cruel. What can inspire a person more toward getting an education or a job than being homeless, than starving, or watching children being physically and psychologically destroyed? It is absurd to suggest that all that is needed by the homeless - many of whom are educated, the unemployed, or the uneducated is to listen to a moralistic lecture rooted in lies and distortion from the "haves." It is especially heartless for the haves to parade around in their finery, eating and living lavishly in accommodations the "have-nots" will never see in person. There is

nothing comforting about seeing others eat when you are without food. Nor are the *charitable* efforts of the "haves" really helpful. They are activities which help the "haves" to feel good about themselves but do not involve any real sacrifices of their resources or lifestyles. The sacrifices of the "haves" create some of their tax breaks and help them stay wealthy.

Dictionary definitions of *inspiration* include: 1. stimulation of the mind or feelings to activity or creativity; 2. a person or thing that causes this state; 3. an inspired idea or action. Inspiration is a term which has been used widely by those who "have" to demonstrate their commitments to the "have-nots." The "haves" offer what they say is inspiration, by telling the "have-nots" that they are at fault for their own dire circumstances which the "haves" say are easily remedied by looking at the opportunities made available to those who get an education, have morals and work hard. In fact, most of the "haves" are born ahead, receiving money, property and other resources which may have been stolen from "have-nots" at some time past or recent; attending K-12 schools that are better funded than those in "have-not" communities; getting preferential treatment in admission to educational institutions because of legacies (family members who attended) and especially as the consequence of racism and the intersection of racism and sexism. The "haves" get the option of achieving higher status in their classes through the repression of grades of students of color, even gifted ones. The exclusion of massive numbers of people of color and many white poor from educational opportunities ensures maximum opportunity and resources for the "haves." Employment discrimination, the rigged system of hiring less qualified whites who cannot compete successfully in fair competition for available jobs, prevents widespread economic advancement of the "have-nots," just as the repeated assertions of inferiority, failures, shortcomings, deficiencies, and undesirable traits of the "have-nots" defeats so many emotionally and psychologically. For millions of the grassroots / working class, every day is an experience of being traumatized.

On top of this, the "haves" then offer minority education and employment programs in which people of color are further conditioned to accept their own inferiority and the supremacy of the "haves." Special "diversity" programs teach the "have-nots" how to "adjust" in predominantly white institutions, meaning how people of color must learn to accept and adapt to perpetual exclusion and mistreatment silently in order to "get ahead" for the chance of being one of the few "have-nots" that are allowed into inner circles of the "haves." No meaningful actions in minority education and employment programs, nor the institutions which implement them, really acknowledge and act *forcefully* against racism and racism + sexism to the extent needed to eliminate discrimination. No one is held accountable *substantively*. At the same time, any acting out of anger against oppression and oppressors by the oppressed is dealt with swiftly and generally with criminal law.

Writing in the Saturday, May 30, 2009 issue of the *Washington Post*, [Colbert I. King](#) in his article "A Voting Rights Reminder for Clarence Thomas" compares Myers "Daddy" Anderson with his grandson, Clarence Thomas, wondering: "Would 'Daddy' be able to reconcile the steadfast support that he gave the local NAACP chapter in Savannah, Ga., with his grandson's votes on race and civil rights-voting issues, which his black critics have characterized as traitorous? As with many other newsmakers whom I have met, Thomas and I have talked about more than I have ever written about him ... But Thomas will get some well-deserved scrutiny when ... the Supreme Court hands down

its decision in a crucial voting rights case, *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District Number One v. Holder*. At issue, whether Congress can continue to require states with egregious past and current discriminatory voting practices to first receive clearance for changes in voting procedures from the Justice Department or a federal judge ... Critics have zeroed in on Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, the provision to guard against efforts to suppress the access of African Americans and other minorities to the ballot box ... Questioning by Chief Justice John Roberts and justices Antonin Scalia, Samuel Alito and Anthony Kennedy during oral arguments this year has led court watchers to believe that the justices are likely to split 5-4 in favor of striking down that provision, with Thomas adding the fifth vote. There is no reason for Clarence Thomas to vote that way. Recall his grandfather's admonition: "Don't shame our race." It would be a crying shame if a black man has a hand in tearing the heart out of the Voting Rights Act."

The decision on this case is still awaited, though few expect Clarence Thomas to decide in favor of supporting African American and other minority voters in this case in which two African Americans of note, Clarence Thomas and Attorney General Eric Holder now seem to be on opposing sides of the issue. In his guest post on the website of the American Constitution Society, "Awaiting, with Trepidation, High Court's Decision on Voting Rights Act" posted May 5 2009, Mark A. Posner, Senior Fellow, [Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law](#); Former Special Sec. 5 Counsel, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, discusses the case.

Ever since July 2006, when Congress acted with overwhelming bipartisan majorities to reauthorize the "pre-clearance" requirement of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1973c, the civil rights community has waited with a mixture of anticipation and trepidation for the day when ... {they} would stand before the Supreme Court to argue its constitutionality. That day, April 29, 2009, has finally come and gone, in the case of *Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District Number One v. Holder*. The Court's decision is expected in late June, and until then one is left to ponder and dissect the over 60 minutes of intense questioning offered up by eight of the nine Justices. Unhappily, this review strongly suggests that trepidation should be the predominant feeling while we wait for the Court to rule."

As of this writing, the decision which was expected on May 30 is not yet known. Whatever its outcome, the inherent desire of all human beings, including Americans, for freedom and justice will not die. "[Force is all-conquering, but its victories are short-lived.](#)" -Abraham Lincoln

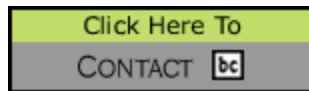
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