



Vol. 5 Number 3 – June, 2023

MAC Arrow

Unitarian Universalist
Multiracial Unity Action Council
(UUMUAC)

“For the Unity of the
light and dark skinned
people of the world.”

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The Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus to carry out and foster anti-racist and multiracial unity activities both within and outside the Unitarian Universalist Association through education, bearing witness and other actions, and expansion of our membership both within and outside the walls of our congregations.

We also seek to defend our UU Principles against those who seek to undermine them.

The Vision Statement

We envision our congregations, denomination, and society as not being color blind but color appreciative; as judging and treating members of the world’s rank and file by the content of their character, not the color of their skin or their cultural heritage; and as treasuring diversity in the context of the “Beloved Community.” We call this vision Multiracial Unitarian Universalism.

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Note: Articles reflect their author's views. They do not necessarily reflect a position taken by the UUMUAC Board of Directors

The Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council (UUMUAC.org)
will host conversations during General Assembly 2023
at the following times (Eastern Daylight):

Wednesday, June 21

12:30-1:45 PM

8:00 PM (This is our monthly 3rd Wed Vesper Service, with open discussion after ward--our only conflict with a GA event.)

Thursday, June 22

9:00-9:45 AM

12:00-12:30 PM

9:30-10:30 PM

Friday, June 23

10:30-11:00 AM

12:00-12:30 PM

8:45-9:30 PM

Saturday, June 24

10:30-11:00 AM

12:00-12:30 PM

8:45-9:30 PM

Sunday, June 25

4:30-5:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81011048673>

Meeting ID: 810 1104 8673

Passcode (use capital letters): UUMUAC

UUMUAC Position Statements for General Assembly 2023

The UUMUAC Board recommends a **NO** vote on Saturday, June 25, on the revision of Article II as drafted by the Article II Study Commission, even as amended. *This proposal threatens the independence of our congregations*, fundamentally changing the relationship between them and the UUA.

We also endorse the candidacy of Dick Burkhart, an independent voice, for a position on the Nominating Committee.

MLK and the Beloved Community Dr. Matthew Shear May 2023

One of my favorite Readings in the grey UU hymnal is #565, titled “Prophets.” It is the words of Universalist minister Clinton Lee Scott, and begins with: “Always it is easier to pay homage to prophets than to heed the direction of their vision.”

Consider these words by UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray that begin an article by her that appeared in the Fall 2021 issue of UU World, the magazine published by the UUA <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/antiracist-faith>:

The most profound theological gift I received from Unitarian Universalism is the belief in and commitment to Beloved Community. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. described Beloved Community as one of unconditional love, which seeks the fullest unfolding of the personality of every person.

A few paragraphs later she also wrote this:

our faith as Unitarian Universalists calls us to respond to [our] fundamental interdependence by nurturing equity, compassion, and justice across the threads that connect us.

That sounds pretty good, doesn't it? I consider that “fullest unfolding of every person” to be at the heart of what liberal religion should be about. And who's opposed to love and nurturing? But other words of hers that follow each of those passages have raised some concerns for me:

In the Beloved Community, racism, poverty, and discrimination would not be tolerated and would instead be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of kinship.

[...] our lives are indelibly woven together. This means that we have a responsibility to each other, and when we allow racism, greed, exploitation, or neglect to define and de-file our relationships, suffering thrives.

“Not tolerated.” Is this also what Dr. King said? Is not allowing racism heeding the direction of his vision? I think that’s a question worth examining, and that’s what I’m going to spend the next 5 or so minutes doing.

Much writing coming out of the UUA describes the Beloved Community as antiracist, antioppressive, multicultural. What did MLK say?

The Montgomery, AL bus boycott began in December 1955, in response to the arrest of Rosa Parks for not giving up her seat to a white man. It made a national figure of Martin Luther King, and following its successful conclusion the following December, he received many invitations to speak, including at Oberlin College on February 7, 1957 and UC Berkeley on June 4, 1957. King’s speeches were similar, touting the reasons for the success of the nonviolent protest in Montgomery. The Berkeley speech was titled “The Power of Nonviolence.” He began by saying that it wasn’t easy getting people on board with a nonviolent form of protest, which he explained “is nonaggressive physically but strongly aggressive spiritually.” Then he said this:

Another thing that we had to get over was the fact that the nonviolent resister does not seek to humiliate or defeat the opponent but to win his friendship and understanding. This was always a cry that we had to set before people that our aim is not to defeat the white community, not to humiliate the white community, but to win the friendship of all of the persons who had perpetrated this system in the past. The [...] aftermath of violence is bitterness. The aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation and the creation of a beloved community.

King went on to say:

[...] nonviolent resistance is also an internal matter. It not only avoids external physical violence but also internal violence of the spirit. And so at the center of our movement stood the philosophy of love.

King was specific about what was meant by that: not erotic or brotherly love, but that form that *in Greek philosophy is called Agape, which in this speech he talked of as “understanding, redemptive good will for all [...]* It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return.” He added:

[...] one seeks to defeat the unjust system, rather than individuals who are caught in that system. And that one goes on believing that somehow this is the important thing, to get rid of the evil system and not the individual who happens to be misguided, who happens to be misled, who was taught wrong. [...]

To me that stands in stark contrast to concepts of accountability that are being woven into the proposed revisions to the UUA Bylaws, and are already being use against ministers and congregants who merely disagree with their methods rather than the goals of ending discrimination.

It is worth noting that Dr. King did not invent the term “Beloved Community.” That honor goes to the philosopher Josiah Royce, who taught at Harvard from 1882 until his death in 1916. King studied Royce in coursework for his PhD at Boston University. Royce wrote of Beloved Community before the term again gained wide understanding and appeal in this country. But he did talk of “loyalty” in a similar way:

by loyalty I mean the practically devoted love of an individual for a community.

Royce said that community has “a value which is superior to all the values and interests of detached individuals,” and went on to define a “community of the loyal” quite broadly, ideally “identifying that community with all mankind.” And he said:

[...] the principle of principles in Christian morals remains this: Since you cannot find the universal and beloved community,—create it.

Dr. King’s use of Beloved Community stands as a stellar example of what in UUism we call the Living Tradition. I see reflections of Royce’s concept of devoted love for an inclusive and increasingly universal community in his “I have a dream” speech at the March on Washington in 1963 as well as the integrated Civil Rights campaigns that followed in 1964 and 1965. And even though two years after those successes he would declare: “some of the old optimism was a little superficial and now it must be tempered with a solid realism” he also said: “I’m not one to lose hope. I keep on hoping. I still have faith in the future.”

Martin Luther King’s belief in and commitment to Beloved Community is indeed a profound gift. He never gave up on his vision of the beloved community. We should keep in mind Clinton Lee Scott’s advice to heed the direction of that vision.

**The International Nature of Anti-black Racism: A Speculative Framework from
the Marxist-Leninist Historical Theist Perspective –
Fragments of a Hypothesis - a Dramatic Essay**

**By Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, Program Coordinator, the Michael Servetus/
InterNational Conference Against Racism, October 28-30, 2022**

I. At the personal level, our lives are blended with joy and sorrows but framed by a kind of anxiety in the world, which is beginning to unravel, more or less, since the second election of Barack Obama, a world which seemed to offer so much hope for a better future. All is somehow unraveling, and institutions which we thought protected us are now attacking us, filling our personal dreams and thoughts with the brittle stigmata of uncertainty.

What did you just say?

2. At the existential level, there's a sense that our lives, which are dependent on so many other people: in the workplace, in our churches and congregations, in our social networks, and most of all, in our families, have for some of us lost their power of fulfillment. Divisions that are springing up around things -- divisions as simple as what book to be read in the public library, whether or not our school boards will truly be committed to public education as distinct from public indoctrinations.

Yes, that's true. We had a rancorous school board meeting last night. They had to call in the police.

3. Politically, the economic system that we have depended on for such a long time, with all of its inequality, all of its oppression and exploitation is no longer working. For many of us, we had the hope it could be made to work for us since it was based on being a parliamentary, democratic republic. Neo-liberalists insisted that using the democratic process was the key force for social change, using both violent and non-violent means. But alas this day: for behind all this personal, existential, and political confusion lies imperialism which is creating a Social Darwinian zoo in which the survival of the fittest is the key reality.

The survival of the fittest. How true. Look at the flood drenched mountains of Pakistan, look at the homeless situation in Chicago or your hometown, look at images on television if you bother to look at television. I have friends who refuse to look at the news anymore. So awful.

4. My thesis is that racism, anti-black racism, specifically neo-racism as an ideology, is the energy that is driving a great deal of the sense that we seem to be disconnected from each other, from the Arctic to the Antarctic. Behind the racism, the forces that are benefitting from this negative energy that is causing so much pain to the world, is a capitalist system which has evolved away from its original purpose, utilitarianism, to use its economic power to bring the greatest good for the greatest number.

A long way from that dream: instead, capitalism in its imperialistic form is reducing the greatest good to be for the smallest number, changing civilization into this zoo you are talking about - not even at the level of a jungle. Instead of utilitarianism we have Ayn Rand's objectivism, which glorifies selfishness in all its brutality as the greatest good.

5. Thanks for that comment. I am arguing that racism as a system of ideas and policies is international in form. This has been true since the triumph of slave labor capitalism in the 18th century, and since then, it has become rooted in the anti-black paradigm created by that slave labor capitalism to prevent its abolition. Racism since 1781 is the main form of division which keeps the rank-and-file of the world from organizing to either reform, reconstruct, or revolutionize this worldwide imperialist system. In other words, anti-black racism is in its ontology and in its phenomenology the paradigm for all forms of racialized divisions AS AN IDEOLOGY OR THEOLOGY circling the globe like a miasmatic fog.

Well, that's quite a hypothesis. I have a friend living in Geneva, Switzerland who argues that the kind of racism they have against immigrants or Muslims is not connected to anti-black racism in US America. But why 1781? I thought we have always had some kind of racism.

6. Not true: from the time when Columbus "discovered" the New World (from the Spanish perspective) to the rise of the US American republic in 1781, the main division of humanity, theological and ideologically, speaking was religion: Jew, Gentile; Christian, Muslim; Monotheist, heathen. Beginning in Virginia in the late 17th century, slavery became based on African labor for political economic reasons, mainly because it was profitable, but there was no elaborate ideological justification for the process. Theologically, there was mainly the doctrine of the elect as it evolved under Calvinism. Calvinist white folk were destined to be saved and non-Calvinists to be damned. And since black folks were neither white nor Calvinists, they were doubly damned, enslavement without hope of salvation in the afterlife. With the rise of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, the slave labor capitalists needed a much more intellectual explanation why the African American slave worker should never be freed. This was in the context of the anti-slave labor movement which emerged during that very same period, called the Rights of Man Movement, symbolized by the opening words of the Thomas Paine version of The Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Paine version?

That's another essay.

So, what happened in 1781?

7. There are six key works in the history of the ideology of racism which has influenced capitalism from its republican days in Virginia to the present day, all rooted in a little-known collection of essays, Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia*, published in 1781 with a revision in 1783. In this work our own Thomas Jefferson lays out the paradigmatic elements of international racism, though he did not know it at the time. He created a racial paradigm based on the essence of anti-black racism based on his firsthand experiences with the slave workers on his plantation. In other words, he claimed to depend on observation, not theological speculations. Yet his essay is filled with faulty generalizations derived from a faulty premise: that the negative attributes he described about black people are not due to the dehumanizing nature of plantation slave labor capitalism, but due to inherent defects in the African American, slave or free. See the appendix for aspects of his vision of inherent inferiority of black people.

If I have time. So, can you sum up his vision?

8. It would be the ideological task of Thomas Jefferson and his school of racist anthropology in the 1780's, as taught at his University of Virginia, to come up with a compelling rationale for destroying any kind of interracial/multiracial unity among the oppressed and exploited folk in the slave state of Virginia. In other words, he came up with his racist paradigm to oppose the Virginia abolitionist movement. His opposition would be based solidly on his vision of the racial inferiority of African people in Virginia and all their descendants, regardless of color and religion. For example, NOTES ends the section on the differences between white Virginians and African Virginians with these words: To our reproach it must be said, that though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments *both of body and mind* (my italics). It is not against experience to suppose that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications.

Wow. I did not know he said it so clearly, this suspicion of his. So how did his "suspicion" get turned into an international phenomenon? How did his suspicion become the paradigm of all forms of racism which would emerge under capitalism on the local, national, and international levels?

9. I will only lay out the trail; others can read his "disciples" in detail on their own. Here we go: *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (*Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, 1853-1855) was a racist and pseudoscientific work of French writer Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau. He argues that there are intellectual differences between human races, that civilizations decline and fall when the races are mixed, and that the white race is superior. It was he who developed the idea of the Aryan as the highest type of white person and Africans and their descendants as the lowest persons. He also asserted that the Jew was a type of African or more precisely an Afrasian who had through a kind of racial cunning become a dangerous part of Aryan society.

That's new: Jews as a type of black people. Although I know an Afrocentric neo-racist who has taken over this view: he says that the real Jews are blacks and the white Jews are not real - they are Ashkenazim -- and there is a debate going on about Amazon showing a video called BLACK HEBREWS: WAKE UP BLACK PEOPLE and refusing to cancel it.

10. Co-evil with de Gobineau is Richard Wagner, later to be one of de Gobineau's followers. He wrote in a major essay called , "Das Judentum in der Musik"[The Jew or Judaism in Music] which included attacks on Jews in general. It was written in 1850 and was reissued in a greatly expanded version under Wagner's name in 1869. It is regarded by some as an important landmark in the history of German antisemitism. He argues like de Gobineau that Jews are not a religion group but a race and, therefore, their conversion to Christianity is impossible and deadly. So-called converted Jews, like Mendelson, are the most dangerous in poisoning German (Aryan) culture. In the expanded version, he brings in more of de Gobineau's ideas and asserting that all depictions of evil in his operas are symbols of "the Jew."

11. Wagner's disciples included one Houston Stewart Chamberlain who was a British-German philosopher. He wrote works whose writing promoted German ethnonationalism, antisemitism [anti-Jewish racism], Social Darwinism, and scientific racism in a book called *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899) in German. He saw the international nature of the huge economic, scientific and technological advances in the West as being the work of the "Aryan race". The enemy of all this progress was the Jew as a negroid intrusion in this Aryan world. This book was translated into English and French and was required reading in major European universities, for both "Aryans" and those non-Aryans being trained to be civil servants and leaders in the colonized and colonializing nations of the 20th century; e.g., Japanese imperialists learning Western ways in those very same universities.

This is a lot of stuff to remember.

12. Don't remember it, learn it; because understanding the ideological nature and history of anti-black racism is fundamental to why we had this Michael Servetus/ InterNational Conference Against Racism (MS/INCAR) in October. May I continue?

13. Aryanism returns to its anti-black roots, its Jeffersonian roots as it were, in one Thomas C. Dixon's, *The Reconstruction Trilogy: The Leopard's Spots* (1902); *The Clansman* (1905); *The Traitor* (1907). This trilogy was, designed to give a novelistic vision of white supremacy as a necessary force to control post-slavery black folk and to defend the new segregation laws emerging after the Supreme Court decision of 1896. In the movie version, *The Birth of a Nation* by D.W. Griffith, the concept of Aryan supremacy is clearly articulated by the victorious leader of the KKK who has crushed the Reconstruction movement.

14. Aryanism and its anti-black component are given a new lease on life by the National Socialist ideologist, Alfred Rosenberg, whose book *The Myth of the 20th Century* published in 1930, was influenced by de Gobineau, Wagner, and Chamberlain. It becomes the racist ideological handbook for the National Socialist German Party aka Nazi-Capitalism and all those European movements modelled on Nazism. Mussolini, for example, justified his war on Ethiopia as one of a superior race against an inferior race, despite the fact that Ethiopia was a member of the European dominated League of Nations. This same rationale would be used by the Japanese imperialists in their war against Korea and China. Indeed, in Nazi-capitalist circles, Japanese were honorary Aryans.

Excuse me. But you are digressing.

15. Okay, back on track. In the 1960's one famous, US American racist anthropologist Carleton S. Coon wrote his famous work, *The Origin of Races* (1962), in order to discredit the emergent Civil Rights Movement. In his pseudo-origin narrative, black folk in all their colors, are the inferior ones – worldwide, picking up the ideas of National Socialism.

I end my historical/ideological journey with *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, a 1994 book by psychologist Richard J. Herrnstein and political scientist Charles Murray, a book based on previous, neo-racist pseudo-scholarship. It argued that one's intelligence and one's class position were determined by IQ test and IQ test results were determined by genetics. Neo-racist

scholars like Dr. William Cosby and Professor Thomas Sowell accepted that notion and began to make a difference between African Americans and black people. The implicitly argued that the African American elite were a product of genetic based intelligence (since they had high IQ scores) and therefore could abandon those black folk with low scores, to be called the black underclass. At the same time, those whites with low IQ's and low socio-economic status were also relegated to the ranks of inferior people, becoming, as it were, the Fifth Victim of Racism. And so, Jefferson's original suspicion shifts from just being racial to becoming a race/class phenomenon, but always racially fixed by some inherent detrimental power, in this case, genetics.

So that's where we are today? Unless you can show that these ideas have continuing influence, I don't see that you have proved your point about the international nature of anti-black racism.

16. Well, what about the ubiquitous use of the term nigger as an epithet for inferior people; e.g., Slavic niggers, sand niggers, brown niggers? What about the British colonialist term for all non-white people in the Empire? Wogs, from the black color of polly wogs, embryonic fogs? What about the use of the term Darkies among some people of color to separate light and dark-skinned members of the so-called same race? The derogative term Schwarzers used by neo-racist Ashkenazim Jews to identify the inferiority of the Sephardim Jews? All modern forms of anti-immigrant racism, regardless of the physical color of the migrants, are grounded in this superior/inferiority paradigm, originating in Jefferson's "suspicion only." In other words, the rise of Eurasian imperialism in the 19th century and even today has been generating the spread of this meme of racial division, based always on inferiority and superiority – this kind of racism, regardless how it seems to be hidden, is always there.

You have to understand - and this is complicated -- the paradigmatic nature of "black". You should see it as a device for creating racialized consciousness beyond its literal meaning. You should recognize that it has been transformed into an ideology divorced from its original skin color meanings. This means you must learn to discern the power of ideology in shaping consciousness within a racist imperialist system. Since Jefferson's essay, various forms of capitalism have used the irrational dimensions of race for specific political economic needs. In Bulgaria, for example, Bulgarians are the majority but Turks are a large minority and are seen among racist Bulgarians as non-white or black.

In Canada, back in the 20th century, the oppressed and exploited French members of the Canadian rank-and-file were seen as "black", les negres de Canada by the Québécois Liberation Front.

To sum it up: when an idea is grasped by the masses of the people, it becomes a material force, and racism in all its forms is such an idea. Our job is to come up with a compelling, counter-idea, a scientifically based idea, yet shaped with the passion of religious faith, to oppose that racism. We must create a new material force among the masses of the world - workers, students, and professionals, and that force is called...

Don't tell me: multiracial unitarian universalism.

Appendix: On Black Inferiority from NOTES ON VIRGINIA by Thomas Jefferson

Note: Jefferson used the English spellings for certain words.

[Why interracial unity is impossible]. Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race.—To these objections, which are political, may be added others, which are physical and moral.

The first difference which strikes us is that of colour. ...the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us. And is this difference of no importance? Is it not the foundation of a greater or less share of beauty in the two races? Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in the one, preferable to that eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immovable veil of black which covers all the emotions of the other race? Add to these, flowing hair, a more elegant symmetry of form, their own judgment in favour of the whites, declared by their preference of them as uniformly as is the preference of the Oranootan [a monkey--FCC] for the black woman over those of his own species. The circumstance of superior beauty, is thought worthy attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs, and other domestic animals; why not in that of man?

Besides those of colour, figure, and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a difference of race. They have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour. This greater degree of transpiration, renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold than the whites...

They seem to require less sleep. A black after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. They are more ardent after their female; but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them.

In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep of course. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid: and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous.

...It will be right to make great allowances for the difference of condition, of education, of conversation, of the sphere in which they move. Many millions of them have been brought to, and born in America. Most of them, indeed, have been confined to tillage, to their own homes, and their own society: yet many have been so situated, that they might have availed themselves of the conversation of their masters; many have been brought up to the handicraft arts, and from that circumstance have always been associated with the whites. Some have been liberally educated, and all have lived in countries where the arts and sciences are cultivated to a considerable degree, and have had before their eyes samples of the best works from abroad. ... But never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never seen even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture. In music they are more generally gifted than the whites, with accurate ears fortune and time, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch. Whether they will be equal to the composition of a more extensive run of melody, or of complicated harmony, is yet to be proved.

Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry.—Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry. Love is the peculiar æstrum of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion, indeed, has produced a Phyllis Whately; but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism [underlining mine]. Ignatius Sancoh [another black poet of that time] has approached nearer to merit in composition; yet his letters do more honour to the heart than the head. They breathe the purest effusions of

friendship and general philanthropy, and show how great a degree of the latter may be compounded with strong religious zeal. He is often happy in the turn of his compliments, and his style is easy and familiar, except when he affects a Shandean fabrication of words. But his imagination is wild and extravagant, escapes incessantly from every restraint of reason and taste, and, in the course of its vagaries, leaves a tract of thought as incoherent and eccentric, as is the course of a meteor through the sky. His subjects should often have led him to a process of sober reasoning; yet we find him always substituting sentiment for demonstration. Upon the whole, though we admit him to the first place among those of his own color who have presented themselves to the public judgment, yet when we compare him with the writers of the race among whom he lived and particularly with the epistolary class in which he has taken his own stand, we are compelled to enrol him at the bottom of the column. This criticism supposes the letters published under his name to be genuine, and to have received amendment from no other hand; points which would not be of easy investigation.

The improvement of the blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by everyone, and **proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life [boldness mine].**

We know that among the Romans, about the Augustan age especially, the condition of their slaves was much more deplorable than that of the blacks on the continent of America. ... But in this country the slaves multiply as fast as the free inhabitants. Their situation and manners place the commerce between the two sexes almost without restraint.—The same Cato, on a principle of economy, always sold his sick and superannuated slaves. ... The American slaves cannot enumerate this among the injuries and insults they receive. It was the common practice to expose in the island Æsculapius, in the Tyber, diseased slaves whose cure was like to become tedious. The exposing them is a crime of which no instance has existed with us; and were it to be followed by death, it would be punished capitally. With the Romans, the regular method of taking the evidence of their slaves was under torture. Here it has been thought better never to resort to their evidence. When a master was murdered, all his slaves, in the same house, or within hearing, were condemned to death. Here punishment falls on the guilty only, and as precise proof is required against him as against a freeman.

Yet notwithstanding these and other discouraging circumstances among the Romans, their slaves were often their rarest artists. They excelled too in science, insomuch as to be usually employed as tutors to their master's children. Epictetus, Terence, and Phædrus, were slaves. **But they were of the race of whites. It is not their condition then, but nature, which has produced the distinction [Bold mine].**

—Whether further observation will or will not verify the conjecture, that nature has been less bountiful to them in the endowments of the head, I believe that in those of the heart she will be found to have done them justice. . . . But the slaves of which Homer speaks were whites. Notwithstanding these considerations which must weaken their respect for the laws of property, we find among them numerous instances of the most rigid integrity, and as many as among their better instructed masters, of benevolence, gratitude, and unshaken fidelity. The opinion that [the African American slaves] are inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination, must be hazarded with great diffidence. . . .

To our reproach it must be said, that though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it, therefore, as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind. It is not against experience to suppose that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications. Will not a lover of natural history then, one who views the gradations in all the races of animals with the eye of philosophy, excuse an effort to keep those in the department of man as distinct as nature has formed them?

This unfortunate difference of colour, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people. Many of their advocates, while they wish to vindicate the liberty of human nature, are anxious also to preserve its dignity and beauty. Some of these, embarrassed by the question, ‘What further is to be done with them?’ join themselves in opposition with those who are actuated by sordid avarice only. Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. **When freed, he [the African American slave] is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture. [Another word for interracial sexuality as a symbol of multiracial unity—my comment].**



Unitarians and Universalists at the United Nations

By Bruce Knotts

Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists have been involved with the United Nations from its beginning. The diplomat who actually wrote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was John Peters Humphrey¹ a Unitarian and member of the Unitarian Church of Winnipeg Manitoba Canada. Another Canadian Newton Bowles was a founder of UNICEF². I spent many hours talking with Newton about the founding of UNICEF. The first UUA General Assembly voted to support the United Nations in its important work.

Unitarian Universalists have had an office at the United Nations since 1962. In 2021 the office was closed and in September 2022 the UUA ceased to have a continuous presence in New York at the United Nations. The only remaining international UU presence at the UN is the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women. What follows are some of the achievements UUs have accomplished at the UN and how we lost our office and influence at this global body.

With the passing of Harry Belafonte, I'm reminded of our work together. The UU Office at the UN together with Harry Belafonte and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights launched the UN Decade of People of African Descent committed to end structural racism around the world. In addition to Harry Belafonte, Alicia Garza of Black Lives Matter, and the family of Tamir Rice and many others spoke at this important event.

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Peters_Humphrey

2 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/legendary-un-adviser-newton-bowles-held-record-for-service/article4786015/>

As co-chair of the NGO (Civil Society) Committee on Human Rights, I played a key role in establishing the UN Decade of People of African Descent: 2015-2024. Harry Belafonte was a keynote speaker at our inaugural event: Confronting the Silence: Perspectives and Dialogue on Structural Racism against People of African Descent Worldwide. The recording of this event is well worth viewing.³ At least listen to my remarks, my introduction of Harry Belafonte, and his wonderful speech. (6:14 - 20:53) I feel the path that we are taking with the United Nations using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights working for diversity, inclusion and integrated efforts of us all to solve common problems, such as climate change and nuclear weapons is the way to move forward.

In addition to founding the UN Decade of People of African Descent, the UU office at the UN also established sexual orientation/gender identity human rights at the UN. When I started work at the UN in January 2008, I was determined to end the discrimination I'd faced in the Department of State due to my sexual orientation. The UN was planning to

celebrate the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Paris in September 2008. I attended planning meetings which discussed the human rights of everyone except for LGBTQIA people. I kept raising my hand and demanded the inclusion of LGBTQIA people. Slowly after many meetings, people begin to accept my proposal. The most important was Sister Joan Kirby, a Catholic Nun. She championed my cause, and I was given the first ever workshop on LGBTQIA rights at the conference in Paris. At the last moment Sister Joan Kirby made me a speaker on a much larger round table discussion. I spoke to a Catholic official from the Vatican who told me he was gay and supported everything I was doing. I spoke to the Swedish Ambassador who said that the European Union planned to propose a draft

3 <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1k/k1klzhtslm>

resolution at the UN General Assembly to condemn violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. When we returned, we met regularly at the Mission of Norway to the UN where we planned the resolution that was adopted on December 18, 2008. I was at that General Assembly.⁴

The UU office at the UN played a key role in the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) which has recently indicted Vladimir Putin for War Crimes. Elaine Harvey, UU of Kingstone Ontario, Canada, and John Washburn of New York, both older White people, led the faith-based caucus to establish the International Criminal Court. Both went to Rome for the negotiations for the Rome Statute which established the International Criminal Court.⁵ They worked especially hard to ensure that women would be protected. Most of the cases that have come before the ICC have been about violence against women.

The UU Office at the UN insisted on gender equity. Every year, we hosted two workshops at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women⁶ which takes place every year in March. We were the only organization which routinely included trans-women.

The UU Office at the UN was part of a large UU network of international engagement. This included the International Conference of Unitarians and Universalists which brought together UUs from around the world; the Partner Church Council which brought American congregations together with UU congregations in other counties; and the only remaining UU international organization, the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women which I am proud to represent at

4 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/12/18/un-general-assembly-statement-affirms-rights-all>

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome_Statute 6 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

the United Nations.⁷ Rev. Carol Houston lives in New York and attends meetings when she can.

Our work was accomplished with a minimal staff plus volunteers and interns. I served as the Director from 2008 to 2022. We had 6 interns during the academic year and 4 during the summer. We recruited interns from New York University, Columbia, Fordham, Adelphi University, SUNY New York, and the University of Michigan. Many volunteers from New York area churches and elsewhere contributed substantial time and energy.

In 2005, the UU Office at the UN founded a project supporting the education of orphaned children in Ghana. This program was strongly supported by UUA Presidents Sinkford and Morales. An article I wrote about the project in 2017 is still posted on the UUA website⁸ as well as an article written by Peter Morales in 2012⁹

I also spent a good deal of time in Taiwan. Taiwan struggled with the issue of same-sex marriage. They held a referendum and a majority of voters voted against same-sex marriage. I spoke in Taiwan to the World League of Freedom and Democracy. I said, “You can’t vote against peoples’ human rights. The majority will always vote against the minority.” My statements were reported in the December 4, 2018 edition of the *Taipei Times*¹⁰ I was repeatedly quoted during the National Assembly debate on same-sex marriage. Soon the Taiwanese government enacted same-sex marriage. It is the only nation in Asia to do so. I am proud of the role I played. Nonetheless, an official high up in the UUA Administration complained, “Why is Bruce in Taiwan? How is he helping Unitarian Universalism there?”

7 <https://www.intlwomensconvo.org>

8 <https://www.uua.org/international/blog/every-child-our-child-giving-orphan-children-chance-bright-future>

9 <https://www.uua.org/international/blog/every-child-is-our-child>.

10 <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2018/12/04/2003705464>.

That brings us to the beginning of the end. And the end. With the focus of the UUA increasingly turning toward White Supremacy Culture. This surprises me because I saw no White Supremacy Culture at the UUA during the Presidencies of Bill Sinkford and Peter Morales. During this UUA administration, international involvement seemed to be no longer important. In fact, currently the only sustained international engagement overseas and at the UN is being done by the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women.

The UUA let go of the UU@UN office lease in 2021. Our Envoy Coordinator and I worked from home. We had three interns that also worked mostly remotely but we also went to the UN when it was open. The Envoy Coordinator quit in April 2022 and was not replaced. I retired in September 2022 and I’ve not been replaced. New York University pulled their interns from the UUA because they were ignored. NYU sent them to Catholic Charities. There is now no office, no staff, no interns, no intern coordinator. The UUA also ended the International Conference of Unitarians and Universalists and the Partner Church Council.

The UUA claims to continue the work of the UU Office at the UN, but I see no evidence of this at the United Nations. The work civil society does at the UN, including all our faith partners requires presence in New York and sustained and continuous engagement with the United Nations Community of civil society, member country diplomats and UN staff.

For 49 years prior to 2011, the UU Office at the United Nations (UU UNO) was an independent affiliate of the UUA, supported by UU churches and individual donations. In 2022 I sent an email to the Co-Moderators of the UUA asking them to undo the 2011 merger agreement to allow the UU UNO to return to an independent organization that could independently raise its own funds. Meg Riley was silent. Charles DuMond said they would unwind the merger if the UUA administration asked them to.

I hope the UUA will return to international engagement and sustained engagement with the United Nations. Donald Trump when he was President told the UN that he hated globalists. I've been a globalist all my life. I don't want the UUA to be a domestic organization focused only on America. An America First policy has a long and terrible history in the United States that we should not repeat.

Bruce Knotts Served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia and worked for Raytheon in Saudi Arabia and on a World Bank contract in Somalia before he joined the U.S. Department of State in 1984. State Department posts took him to Greece, Zambia, the Office of Central American Affairs, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, and the Bureau of International Organizations. In 2004, Bruce was elected to the Board of Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies. Bruce retired from the Foreign Service in 2007 and joined the Unitarian Universalist Office at the United Nations as its Executive Director at the beginning of 2008.

“A Teacher Objects to Indoctrination”

a review by Dick Burkhardt of

Exploring White Fragility:

Debating the Effects of Whiteness Studies on America's Schools

By Christopher Paslay (2020)

Paslay is a long-time teacher in the Philadelphia public schools who applies - to his own school district - the critical thinking skills that he teaches. He has vocally resisted “Orwellian indoctrination” in the racial ideology of “white fragility” and the “diversity trainings” based on this ideology. White fragility is a controversial theory of Robin DiAngelo, not supported by rigorous scholarship in the social sciences, deriving instead from the whiteness studies of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the postmodern tradition of philosophy

Paslay seeks “a true open dialogue as opposed to a rigid ideological monologue...a tolerant, holistic approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion” (p xi). Based on enduring “scores of anti-bias workshops”, he characterizes the monologue as follows: “Disagreeing, of course, is strictly forbidden. Questioning, probing, challenging, or offering any alternative perspective outside of the approved anti-racist school of thought is not an option; all disagreements are invalid, born out of ignorance and misinformation.” (p xv).

Further, he notes that “Besides the fact that these trainings are based on flawed implicit bias research, there is little evidence that they have any lasting effect on discriminatory behavior, and in some cases, may even provoke resentment among participants”. He also cites a “concept known as stereotype threat, [where] the mere mention of race can directly affect academic achievement” (p xvi). Related to this is a study where “the teachers surveyed – many of whom were people-of-color – felt that race-based discipline wasn’t working”.

Overall, he finds these workshops to be “patronizing and condescending, ...unconsciously reinforcing white supremacy culture and the powerlessness of people-of-color” (p xvii), a theme that the black linguist John McWhorter deplors as well, calling it “neo-racist”. In his first chapter, Paslay really digs in to and skewers “whiteness studies”. He notes that it is “more about forwarding a political narrative than using science to prove it”, or in DiAngelo’s own words, “rather than work to prove its existence [racism and white supremacy], work to reveal it” (p 2), simply assuming that it is pervasive.

These DiAngelo words are not based on solid statistics but are a declaration of anti-white prejudice, despite DiAngelo herself being white. That is, she is ashamed of her own self-identified race and insists that everyone else of European descent should feel the same guilt that she feels. If they refuse she labels them as suffering from a mental illness she invented called “white fragility”, reminiscent of the contrived psychological diagnoses of Soviet dissidents.

Those who’ve read her “White Fragility” book will note that she actually features her own anti-black racism, reveling in her confessions of sin. Again, she just presumes that this racism must be as inherent for others as herself, even though the last four presidential elections in the US demonstrate that a significant majority of Americans are not racist. Ironically, this presumption is, in itself, a form of racism according to the standard definition “prejudice or discrimination based on race”. Paslay cites the “double standards” this leads to, where “whites are judged and held to different standards than people-of-color” (p 4).

Some black scholars in the Marxist tradition, such as Toure' Reed, have noted that all this is a form of race reductionism versus their preferred class reductionism. That is, all strife and injustice is reduced to race (white vs black) instead of class (owner versus worker). In the real world, injustice is, of course, multi-faceted, but usually derives from underlying economic disparities or competition or avarice. Slavery, which has existed in various forms for thousands of years, independently of race, is a prime example.

For Reed, the only politically practical way forward is to extend universal programs, like Social Security, to include programs like Medicare for All and a universal basic income. These programs will disproportionately help struggling peoples, especially blacks. Instead CRT focuses on dubious racial concepts and magical thinking – that somehow eliminating “white privilege” will automatically eliminate racial injustice, as if our political economy were based on race, not on capitalism.

In particular, note that white privilege is actually mostly class privilege. Over the last 40 years of escalating inequality in the US, the hardest hit identity has been the white working class, simply because they started out with the best paying blue-collar jobs and had more to lose. In this case, the black working class actually gained with respect to their white brothers and sisters, even though this was sometimes obscured because the whole working class lost massively relative to the top 10%.

Unlike the abstract pronouncements of whiteness studies, Paslay digs deeper and lays out some practical recommendations. For example,

Seek not to end privilege, but to “expand advantages to people of all races”.

Replace coercive techniques and indoctrination by healthy dialogue and debate in a spirit of multiracial unity.

Stop using insulting labels such as “white supremacy” and “racist” applied to people who don't fit these labels according to standard usage. [See Irshad Manji's book “Don't Label Me”]

Stop disparaging “color-blindness” because “most people don't mean color doesn't matter, they mean that it *shouldn't* matter”.

Discard the notion that “it's impact that matters, not intent” [as if accidental death should be punished like premeditated murder]. Instead “whites and people-of-color [should] interact as co-creators and share responsibility for effective communication” (p 19).

Additional chapters explore in depth topics like “Methodology”, “Anti-bias Training”, “Culture Matters”, “Parents and Patriarchy”, “Assault on Learning”, “Racial Disparities and School Discipline”, “The Power of Expectation”, and “Solutions”. Each chapter uproots the CRT verbiage, then concludes with recommendations and footnotes, drawing on the wisdom of the ages, not the ideology of the moment.

For the last chapter, on “Solutions”, the recommendations for teachers include

Multicultural education should be based on unity, not dichotomy. Make it a blending of assimilation and cultural pluralism, based on our nation’s core values.

Change “anti” approaches to “pro” approaches, from blame and accusation to seeking and honoring common ground.

Interact with students as individuals, not as members of identity groups, creating rapport in pro-active ways.

