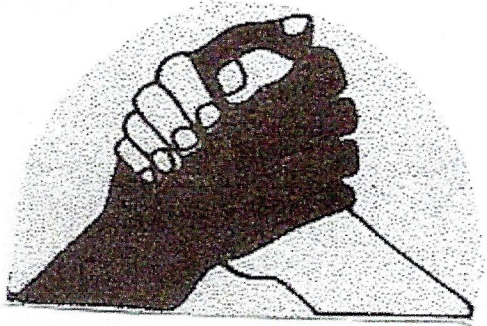


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# MAC Arrow

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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## The Story of the Seven Principles

By the Rev Denise D Tracy

In 325 A.D. there was a council in Nicea. The leaders of the early church met to decide the theology of the church. The majority of believers were Arian/Unitarians and did not agree with the idea that God was a Trinity. Votes were taken and repeatedly the Arian/Unitarians won. The Emperor Constantine was a Trinitarian Christian. He got tired of the votes not agreeing with his Trinitarian stance. So he stationed guards inside the room where the vote was taken as a way of pressuring the Council to vote his way. On the next vote, while guards stood watch, no surprise, fearing for their very lives, the Trinity was adopted by the Council of Nicea. The Arian/Unitarians lost the vote. History was written by winners—the Trinity became the theological stance of the early Christian church.

I tell you this story because what we believe about what was decided is not often told to us fully. In the 1960's the UUA was a white male bastion. Most Minister's and congregational Board Chairs were men. Women's sphere was the Women's Federation. There were a few women ministers left over from the Iowa Sisterhood, which had trained women for ministry in the wilds of the Midwest, where Harvard men did not want to live and be ministers. These few women ministers were fading from view. They sat on the sidelines of meetings in the margins of our faith. The UU Ministry was male and white.

I was ordained in 1974 at the NY GA, in an all Women Ceremony sponsored by the UUWF, to highlight the future of women in ministry. I left for a job in campus ministry. At that time, I was the 8<sup>th</sup> woman to be employed in the UU ministry. I attended my first UUMA chapter meeting in Sept. In attendance were 8 men over the age of 50 and me, age 24. The group began with a ritual that was surprising. Each man told the dirtiest joke they had heard since the last meeting. I remember well the first joke, about a Hispanic man named Jose, who was attending his first major league baseball game. When asked how he liked the sport, he replied it was amazing that all the players had 4 balls. "Oh good, racist and sexist," I thought. I don't remember the next few jokes. I was shocked and could not figure out what I was going to do or say when it came to be my turn. Then something remarkable happened, Nat Lauriat, minister of the Unitarian Church of Hartford when it was his turn, was silent for a long time. He then looked at me and said, "I have a daughter your age. This isn't going to work any more is it?" "Not if you want me to attend." In one fell swoop the white men gave up their dirty joke ritual. Over the years I held on to this moment when other white men held onto language, theology, practices, etc. rather than change to include women. I knew change was possible because I had seen it happen, once.

We see the UUA as it is. We do not see that within the last 50 years change in language, theology, ministry and congregations has been monumental. We are not who we once were. (Thank goodness!) But there is a story in how we got to where we are. In 1976, I supported Paul Carnes for UUA President. He ran on a platform of creating a Women and Religion Committee and a W&R resolution, which would work to make the UUA a better environment for women by supporting equality. Since I supported Carnes, I was asked to be on the original W&R Committee. We began our work. At our first meeting in 1976, we created a list. On that list was the theological statement of the UUA, which we felt was outdated and must be changed. In 1979 we held our first conference at Grailville, Ohio. Misty Sheehan, from MI, where I had moved and founded the W&R committee of the Michigan District, led a workshop on the UUA Statement of Faith which had in it the words, We Believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. She asked, "Do you feel included by this language?" Unanimous answer: No. Loud. Proud and Clear. From that conference came the idea that the UUA needed a new statement of faith. Then after only 2 years in office, Paul Carnes died. Question: Would the UUA go on with its goal of supporting equality?

In 1980, the first Continental W&R Conference was held in E Lansing, MI, where I was then the minister. Another workshop began to draft this new statement of faith. It was exciting. Before we left the conference, a basic form was adopted by the conference. The new UUA President elected by the Board, Eugene Pickett, supported Carnes vision of equality. But do not think for a moment it was easy. The new principles were drafted and presented to the 1981 GA. By then we had been working since 1976—5 years. There were two tensions. The new principles did not mention God or the Judeo Christian tradition. There were theologically Christian ministers who felt we were moving away from traditional Christianity, and in truth, we were. There was also a growing desire to recognize our home, the earth, as part of our spirituality. This made many folks nervous. At the 1981 GA, in a midnight session between feminists and UUA leaders, Denny Davidoff, then head of the UUWF, single handedly, made a decision to table the principles and refer them for a year of study. I was so enraged, I never spoke to her again. But there was a vote and for a year, we studied. A committee of male white ministers was appointed to rewrite (our) principles.

The new version was brought to the GA in both 1982 & 83. Then we studied for another year. At the 84 GA the principles were tentatively approved. There was general discomfort by the conservatives of the growing support for earth based spirituality. It was a fuse ready to be ignited. In 1985 at GA, Paul L'Heureux went to the mike and suggested the phrase "Interdependent web of which we are a part" be added to include that we were all in this together. With this phrase the waters calmed, the lit fuse fizzled. The statement of the seven principles was adopted in 1985, unanimously. It took 9 years from the W&R committee to adoption. I was present for it all.

Along the way several ideas were rejected. One was a list of religions as part of the statement. Another was a list of people or causes for justice. It was felt that these lists would be constantly out of date and offend or exclude both people and/or groups. I feel both of these decisions were right. If there are causes or groups, we as a denomination wish to support, there are platforms, procedures and social responsibility staff people to create year-long study mandates. It is our responsibility to practice our faith with new awarenesses and learnings. The GA can adopt justice platforms which empower denominational leaders and congregations to speak and act for justice.

I believe that the Seven Principles should be considered similarly to the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights is the immutable and unchangeable part of our Constitution. Amendments can be added to augment and clarify or to create new imperatives for our country. I believe the Seven Principles document, created over nearly a decade of congregational study needs to remain as the Statement of Faith of our Association. I say Association because the UUA is not a denomination like other religious groups within the USA. In the UUA every congregation is independent and the UUA Board or GA may make suggestions but no congregation has to obey any decision of the UUA. This is why decisions take so long. Decisions must pass through every congregation, be sent to the Districts/Regions and GA and then back to the congregations. This process keeps the power within the congregations. It is called a bottom up system. Over the last 10 years, there is a group within our Association that wants the power to change from bottom up to top down. The UUA Board would make all of the decisions, not the congregations. I do not wish this change to be implemented.

Currently the UUA is considering adding an 8<sup>th</sup> principle about racism. I believe in the 8<sup>th</sup> principle, I also believe that it should be considered as a First Amendment to the Seven Principles. The first principle says that we should Respect and affirm all people. The 8<sup>th</sup> principle should be considered as an amendment for clarification, creating a programmatical priority for our congregations. If the 8<sup>th</sup> principle were considered in this way it would affirm its priority and allow other clarifications to be developed as well. Currently, there are now groups

working on Principles 9, 10, 11 and 12. Which could be the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> amendments. I do not want a long laundry list of justice actions added to our faith statement.

I have heard that anyone who opposes the 8<sup>th</sup> principle is racist. I believe anyone raised in America, white, black, brown, Asian or indigenous...everyone is racist, or grows up with racist pre-conceptions and stereotypes. I monitor my own beliefs and patterns every day. I believe we, as an Association of Congregations, should work on racism and create it as a priority. I also think that making it an amendment to the Seven Principles means we can add other priorities similarly, as needed. For instance: LGBTQ, Ablist, etc

In 325 A.D. the Council of Nicea was passed by intimidation. I often wonder how the story of our Association will be remembered. Will people acknowledge that 50 years ago there were no women in ministry, we said aloud that we believed in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man and to challenge this was tantamount to sin? Once upon a time I was the third highest woman in the UUA system. I now have no power. I only hope that someone suggests a procedural change that allows the Seven Principles to remain as the basic faith document and also allows amendments for clarity and priority.

### **Afghan Women's Fund Update** *By Fahima Gaheez, Executive Director*

After spending \$ 2.3 trillion, losing hundreds of thousands of innocent people in 20 years of war, dropping many tons of bombs on the poorest villages in one of the poorest countries in the world, which already went through decades of human misery and tragedy after tragedy, in search of the terrorist Taliban fighters, the U.S made a deal with the very terrorists that they pursued for two decades. The above statistics do not include deaths caused by disease, loss of access to food, water, hospitals, infrastructure, and/or other indirect consequences of war.

The Trump administration signed an agreement with the Taliban 18 months ago against the will of Afghans, while also sidelining the Afghan elected government. The Biden administration's irresponsible withdrawal sent a shockwave through the whole nation of Afghanistan. Biden put the 35 M Afghans on a silver platter and presented them to the Taliban. The Taliban took control of Afghanistan on August 15, and since then, their previous treatment of people has resurfaced.

Tens of thousands of people rushed to the airports and crowded onto planes leaving everything behind. Tens of thousands of other people are in hiding, fearing for their lives, and moving from place to place to avoid the Taliban's persecution. Although the Taliban announced an amnesty, their foot soldiers still raid homes, terrorize people and beat them up, put them in jail, or just kill them on the spot. There are many protests on the streets of several cities against their violence and harsh laws, and women are leading many of these protests. The Taliban tried to end the protests by firing their weapons into the air as the demonstrators got closer to the presidential palace. They also beat up journalists who were covering the events. They have ordered all barbers not to cut men's beards too short and live music is forbidden. Although the schools are open, girls' high schools are not open yet. Gender segregation is intact in colleges and universities.

After the Taliban took over, the banks' hours were limited and the salaries of government employees were not paid. The Taliban are beating and whipping people who steal a loaf of bread for their families because they don't have any income anymore, desperate families are selling their children to save the lives of other family members and their children. Most government offices are closed. The Taliban announced an all-male interim government and most women who were in high-ranking positions stay home. Everyone's life is pretty much controlled by a bunch of fanatic radical religious groups who have no knowledge of how to govern

and unfortunately, it feels like they haven't entered a double-digit century yet, let alone the 21 century. There is a degrading and depressing political environment inside Afghanistan and many people feel hopeless. Although Afghanistan and Afghans live in the dark ages, as one volunteer put it very nicely "We will lighten up our lives, even if it is with a candle".

We, the Afghan Women's Fund, will hold that candle and find ways to help people, especially women, to be educated and self-sufficient. Most of our work is in rural areas where the Taliban already had considerable power for years. We have worked with villagers who are starving for education and a better life under difficult circumstances, Together we will succeed. Our newest girls' school already opened and I am happy to report that the Taliban officials who came for the opening ceremony of our newly constructed Achin girls school, gave thanks to us, and promised, soon, the school will be open to older girls too. They also promised that this school will be a high school, in the near future.

AWF is, and will be on the ground, always engaged, as we do our work regardless of what happens. When the Taliban were in power previously (1996-2001), they closed all schools for girls but there were tens of thousands of clandestine schools, people were using their basements, living rooms, and yards as teaching spaces. This time the Taliban promised that they won't close the girls' schools as long as girls respect the Islamic dress code and the schools don't teach anti-Islamic curriculums. Afghans are very resilient people, they will look for ways and find ways to succeed; and we, the AWF team, will be with them and will stand with them. We have opened hundreds of literacy and vocational training classes for the past 20 years and helped tens of thousands of girls with their education, and we will continue to do so. Education is the only way to win over oppressive ideology. If they are given the opportunity, Afghan women will bring the ray of hope, the ray of light, and the light of success to their respective communities. Afghan women need helpful partners to go forward. Let's be partners with Afghan women.

[afghanwomensfund.org/donate](http://afghanwomensfund.org/donate)

### **"Anti-intellectualism vs Anti-reason"**

A Review by Dick Burkhart of

### **"The Age of American Unreason In a Culture of Lies"**

By Susan Jacoby (2nd ed, 2018)

This history-conscious book was recently updated from the original 2008 edition to take into account the Trump phenomenon. Senior journalist and public intellectual Jacoby delves deeply into the religious roots of anti-intellectualism and unreason as expressed by fundamentalist religion from the 19th century "Great Awakening", through the 1920s Scopes trial, to the revival of fundamentalist / political / racial populism since 1970. However she seems less aware of how all this has been rooted in economic inequality, especially the escalating inequality since 1980.

In addition, the focus on fundamentalism blurs the distinction between anti-intellectualism and unreason. For example, there are aspects of Catholicism, going back to Aquinas and the Jesuits, which are strongly intellectual but still dogmatic. The same phenomenon occurs with ideologies. For example, Marxism has some highly intellectual aspects (scientific and dialectical materialism, etc.) while also being dogmatic on certain doctrines, e.g., "labor theory of value". Similarly neo-classical economic theory is highly intellectual but based on false doctrines – the greedy "economic man", mechanistic rather than complexity-based models, etc. And today's "Critical Theories" combine extreme intellectualism with dogmatic assertions of certain unscientific doctrines of race, gender, etc.

It is clear that the human mind has two contradictory tendencies: (1) a strong liking for simplistic explanations and (2) a willingness to embrace elaborate theories to justify those explanations when they come up short. These tendencies are resolved by the scientific method, which looks for the simplest explanations (mathematical models) consistent with the evidence. Thus arguments over beliefs are replaced by arguments over evidence, and ambiguous theorizing is replaced by logic and calculation, combining into requirements for testability or falsifiability of assertions. Not being a scientist, Jacoby comes up short on the need to refocus general education on understanding and practicing the scientific method, not just facts, for civic, not just vocational, reasons.

However, with considerable historical justification, Jacoby sees that "American anti-intellectualism represented the flip side of American democratic impulses in religion and education" (p xix). That is, "One of the most remarkable characteristics of America's revolutionary generation was the presence and influence of so many genuine intellectuals" (p. xvii), yet they fostered democracy, not aristocracy, hence the most simple-minded forms of religion and education for the masses. What she fails to note is that this transition to anti-intellectualism in politics has been the norm for post-colonial societies. In fact the high-minded leaders of any successful endeavor or movement are often followed by more corrupt leaders until a new cycle of reform or innovation begins.

Jacoby also notes that simplistic fundamentalist-type thinking on both the left and the right helps explain today's extreme cultural and political polarization: "intellectuals and non-intellectuals alike, whether on the left or the right, tend to tune out any voice that is not an echo" (p xxviii), pointing out that Trump's anti-intellectualism was preceded by Sarah Palin's and that Obama was criticized for his intellectualism, such as his love of Shakespeare. However, Jacoby did not anticipate today's growing backlash against anti-intellectualism and unreason, especially conspiracy theories and the like, by principled leaders across the political spectrum. That is, voices from the Enlightenment are once again echoing, even as the true believers dig in.

Jacoby is an avowed atheist, hence not afraid to take on any religion, which, as Thomas Jefferson said, "picks my pocket" or "breaks my leg". Thus religious justifications for outlawing all, or most, abortions should be rejected as they would needlessly cause financial or physical harm to some women. How about religious rejections of biological evolution in favor of the Genesis story? Here the consequences are less directly personal, but how could anyone who denies evolution comprehend the evidence for global climate change and its consequences for earth's ecosystems? Thus religious beliefs could easily lead to societal, even civilizational harm. But Jacoby is not calling for the policing of religions but for open dialogue on the civic consequences of certain religious beliefs that have entered the political arena.

In addition to religious beliefs, "is the issue of pseudoscience, which Americans on both the left and the right continue to imbibe as a means of rendering their social theories impervious to evidence based challenges" (p 83). Her prime examples are Marxism and Social Darwinism, but she also notes several powerful counter movements, such as the popular lyceum lectures of the early 1800s and the astounding success of H.G. Wells' "Outline of History" in 1920, fueling "middlebrow culture" – more secular, in depth, and worldly expositions of recent discoveries. Think National Geographic magazine and now the proliferation of documentaries based on modern scholarship, historical novels and films too. Jacoby contrasts these with pseudoscientific fads in psychology, social theory, spirituality, self-help, career success, etc .

I found Jacoby's analysis of the 1960s counter-culture and the generation gap to be particularly interesting. She sees the WW II generation as, not great, but "grateful" – for victory, the GI Bill, plentiful jobs, and the rapid spread middle class lifestyles. But their children – we baby boomers - who took such progress for granted, demanded more. Not just material success, but a moral rectitude to match it - the civil rights, anti-war, and back-to-nature movements. This came across as "ungrateful" to many of their parents, who were also afraid of the consequences of revolutionary fervor.

The result was an escalating political and cultural polarization, since many were left behind: "liberals and conservatives were no more interested in talking to one another on campuses during the 60s than they are today...One of the most reprehensible results of this abdication of responsibility was the ghettoization of African-American, women's, and ethnic studies" (p 148). Meanwhile fundamentalist anti-intellectualism extended to "a new disdain for scientific as well as scholarly elites" combined with "hatred of liberal trends within churches themselves" (p 155). The Southern Baptists split off and became more fundamentalist, while the "Crusade for Christ" went sought to create a new youth movement, along with an expanding network of colleges and revivalist ministries and media. It was an era of ideological battlegrounds, such as Pope John XXIII versus Billy Graham, also of realignments, such as of fundamentalists with conservative Catholics and Jews, and liberal Protestants with liberal Catholics and Jews.

Classical pseudoscience, like "intelligent design", has now been overtaken by "junk thought", like the claim that the MMR vaccine causes autism, despite massive studies that have found no correlation, let alone causal mechanism. In this case it happens that the MMR vaccine is given at about the same age that babies begin to show signs of autism, and the anti-vax activists are disregarding the basic scientific principle that "correlation is not causation". Jacoby also cites "fat studies", where objections to obesity are regarded as discriminatory, despite massive studies demonstrating negative health impacts from obesity. In this case, there is not only correlation but there are numerous causal mechanisms, although there may be uncertainty as to how those mechanisms operate in particular individuals. There have even been studies where certain health benefits are correlated with being slightly overweight, so Jacoby would be better off emphasizing the ongoing development of medical knowledge rather than simplistic attacks for or against fat.

However, Jacoby jumps right into the mine fields of the gender wars, where controversial theories and studies abound. For example, she describes how some law students and faculty "have turned feminism upside-down by insisting that rape law not be part of the required curriculum because it would be too unsettling to too many female students" (p 242). Or that "new theories about the 'boy brain, girl brain' dichotomy cross political and cultural boundaries, extending from liberal academics to religious fundamentalists upholding the concept of divinely ordained separate spheres of responsibility for men and women" (p 233).

Jacoby wraps up her critique by citing the "dumbing down" of public life. She suggests that "styles of presidential leadership are shaped by public knowledge – and lack of knowledge" (p 289) more than the personality of the president, with Trump's twitter style being the perfect fit for all too many Americans. Or "public ignorance and anti-intellectualism are not identical, of course, but they are certainly kissing cousins" (p 290). The intellectual contrast between John Kennedy and Donald Trump seems to say it all, except that the public hold of the corresponding conspiracy theories (Kennedy assassination vs purported election fraud) shows that the situation today is far worse.

Yet Jacoby is confident that at some point "unassailable reality will challenge the delusions and shatter the illusions of Americans in the post-truth era that provided the soil for Trumpism" (p 308). Meanwhile she assigns us the mission of "cultural conservation...the urgent task at this dismal epoch in American intellectual history. What can be saved, and how can it be saved, until the return of sanity in a post-post-truth era?" (p 316). But what form will this reality check take? She suggests cultural backlash, but for fundamental change, I'd look deeper, into climate disasters, geopolitical defeats, economic crises, pandemics, resource or ecosystem shocks, and more.

## **Possible Article 2 Study Commission proposal for revision to Principle 1**

The Inherent Worth and Dignity of Every Person Deemed Marginalized, with the highest worth and dignity allocated to those with the highest marginalization scores

## **On the Fight Against Racial Discrimination**

*By Prof. Alan Spector*

The Unitarian Universalists have a long and proud history of standing up for social justice. This includes the rights of people from all "race" - ethnic and religious groups. We must acknowledge that at different times and different places, many members of certain groups are targeted for more intense mistreatment. On the individual level, every person's pain, no matter what group they are associated with is no more an injustice than anyone else's. But just as we pay special attention to those diseases, or those environment problems or those natural disasters that focus on particular groups, we must understand and oppose the reality that in the USA, black working class people (as well as many latinx, Native Americans and other groups whose dominant origin is not from Europe) face, as a group, more systemic mistreatment, regardless of the reality that on the individual level, someone from any group can be mistreated. Therefore, we must continue our strong stand in opposition to all forms of racial-ethnic discrimination. Opposing racist discrimination is a cornerstone of opposing all forms of mistreatment.

A pernicious trend has developed among some who call themselves "anti-racist." They assert that all white people are guilty of and responsible for the racist abuse that minority groups experience because they supposedly benefit from that mistreatment. This is not merely "unfair to white folks." It harms the struggle against racism. White working class people have worse lives because of racist discrimination against POC. What drags down one group drags down all groups. While many white people may have immediate advantages over many working class POC, these advantages are like the advantages of those on the Titanic who lived a few hours longer as the water first drowned those below. The notion that "white people in general are the problem" harms the struggle as it takes attention away from those institutions, corporations and other interest groups who are the real beneficiaries of racist discrimination. In fact, it is no accident that some of these very wealthy corporations who implement policies that harm POC and white working class people are providing significant funding for the "blame all white people" philosophy. Promoting the idea that all white people are guilty of racist discrimination actually helps sustain that very discrimination.



**"Power versus Violence"**  
A 5 star Review by Dick Burkhart of  
**"On Violence"**  
By Hannah Arendt (1969)

This classic work, which grew out of the Cold War, continues to have lessons for today. A central theme is the counterintuitive relationship between power and violence. Mao's claim that "all power comes out of the barrel of a gun", Arendt says, is dead wrong. Reality is that power comes from the committed and coherent action of the many, against which, the violence of the few is impotent. The US defeat in Vietnam was a classic example, as is its corresponding defeat today in Afghanistan. Violence, she says, can be effective only as an immediate, short term action in support of a far larger power or worthy cause.

A key underlying reason is that "the end is in danger of being overwhelmed by the means which it justifies... Since the end of human action ... can never be reliably predicted, the means used to achieve political goals are more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals" (p 4). Warfare as a means could easily become obsolete except that "no substitute for this final arbiter in international affairs has yet appeared on the scene" (p 5). Instead the arms race (between major powers) or counterinsurgency (major against minor powers) continues, based on variety of hypothetical scenarios until the public will to bear the costs is exhausted. But these speculative scenarios, "because of their inner consistency, have a hypnotic effect" (p 8).

While revolutions truly do depend upon "the power of the people", they cannot be instigated by violent acts alone but have been "always and everywhere the necessary result of circumstances entirely independent of the will and guidance of particular parties and whole classes" (p 12). Technological and economic change has become a key, but unpredictable, factor in those circumstances. Arendt finds the modern notion of "progress" to be more productive than all notions of revolution, but it too falls short in face of very rapid changes.

Speaking of the black power movement of the late 60s, Arendt notes that "Black violence can be understood in analogy to labor violence a generation ago" (p 19). She notes that the one positive slogan of the 60s youth movement was the demand for "participatory democracy" but that not much came out of that, nor of their strong moral stance. "What the modern rebels have lacked" is the "down-to-earth interests of the working class and to identify with it" (p 24).

Delving more deeply into the psychology of power, Arendt notes that "the instinct of submission, an ardent desire to obey and be ruled by some strong man, is at least as prominent in psychology as the will to power, and, politically, perhaps, more relevant" (p 39). In fact, the two are interconnected, as we see today with Trumpism and in certain evangelical churches, where "God" substitutes for the "strong man" or "alpha male". Flipping this dynamic, Arendt notes that "a strong disinclination to obey is often accompanied by an equally strong disinclination to dominate and command" (p 40), something that I recognize in myself and other classical liberals when it comes to certain revolutionary ideologies and other unreasonable demands.

Switching to more representative governments, Arendt observes that "all political institutions are manifestations of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them". As the authority of the ruling class declines, it may be replaced by a strong man and violence may ensue: "tyranny, as Montesquieu is discovered, is therefore the most violent and least powerful of forms of government" (p 41). Or, "power always stands in need of numbers, whereas violence ... relies on implements". In fact, "the extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All" (p 42).

Delving more deeply into revolutions, Arendt notes that "where power has disintegrated, revolutions are possible but not necessary...Disintegration often become manifest only in direct confrontation" (p 49) and an organized group must be prepared to seize power. Legitimacy (divine right of Kings, electoral status, etc) is portrayed as symbolic of power but is not the basis of it. It is an "appeal to past, while justification relates to an end that lies in the future" (p 52). "Violence may destroy power" when it destroys legitimacy or popular support. That is, "to substitute violence for power can bring victory, but the price is very high: for it is paid not only by the vanquished, it is also by the victor in terms of his own power" (p 53).

Totalitarian terror, such as Stalinism, is very revealing of the dynamics of power: "Every kind of organized opposition must disappear before the full force of terror can be let loose". And in this case, the regime "turns not only against its enemies but against its friends and supporters as well, being afraid of all power" (p 55). Or, "Power and violence are opposites; where one rules absolutely, the other is absent...to speak of nonviolent power is actually redundant" (p 56).

Moving on another power dynamic, Arendt examines the black power movement of the late 60s and liberal support for it. "Racism, white or black, is fraught with violence by definition because it objects to natural organic facts which no persuasion or power could change" (p 76). She says that when white liberals declare that "we are all guilty" and confess their sins, they are actually attempting to absolve themselves without doing anything. That is, "where all are guilty, no one is; confessions of collective guilt are the best possible safeguard against the discovery of culprits. ... it serves quite effectively to give the very real grievances ... of the Negro population an outlet into irrationality [black rage]" instead of constructive action.

In fact, historically, according to Arendt, it is the hypocrisy that cause more rage than injustice. Another unproductive outlet may be witch hunts. And "since violence always needs justification, an escalation of violence in the streets may bring about a truly racist ideology to justify it" (p 77). She was thinking of the ideology promoted by black power activists in the late 1960s, but it could also apply to the "whiteness studies" of Critical Race Theory today.

Finally, Arendt says that "Violence does not promote causes, neither history nor revolution, neither progress nor reaction; but it can serve to dramatize grievances. ...it is more the weapon of reform than revolution" (p 79). "However only if such reforms can be made with comparative ease" will violence be effective in its long- term goals. "The danger of violence ... will always be that the means overwhelm the end. If the goals are not achieved rapidly, the result will be not merely defeat but the introduction of the practice of violence into the whole body politic." (p 81).

And as to power, "the monopolization of power causes the drying up or oozing away of all authentic power sources in the country" (p 82). This monopolization may be by an unaccountable bureaucracy or party machine, not just an oligarchy. Its defeat will not come from violence but from intolerable conditions, leading to mobilization of the people.

## **Structures of Racism and Structures of Healing**

*by Wesley V. Hromatko, D.Min.*

**Editor's Note: For a copy of this article with all the footnotes, send your request to [uusj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uusj@sbcglobal.net)**

The Bible states that all the nations of the earth have the same color blood (RSV Acts 17:27). Blood was seen as the principle of life, and Humanists would agree, though the nature of life is more complicated. But the Bible has also long been used as a tool of oppression, with slave holders, for example, forgetting the story of the Exodus. Harriet Tubman, however, led her people out of slavery, thus earning the name "Moses," as she followed "the drinking gourd," the Big Dipper. Those who were lucky made it to the underground railway

stations, the Thoreau farm, or Emerson's place, to stay in hiding until they could get a train ticket for Canada. Unitarian Universalists and others who were opposed to slavery had different reasons, but they were all moved by something more than their own interests.

In our day, we are still having discussions and disagreements about racism and how to end it. Something called Theory with a capital T lies behind many of these conversations within the Unitarian Universalist Association, and specifically Critical Race Theory or CRT, which has been defined as "the view that the law and legal institutions are inherently racist and that race itself, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is a socially constructed concept that is used by white people to further their economic and political interests at the expense of people of color."

Though CRT is complex, many of its central ideas have slipped into common use, including the beliefs that (1) "objective reality is a myth," (2) "science" is "a specifically male approach to knowledge," (3) democracy is oppressive and "accounts for black subordination and the maintenance of a racist regime," (4) reason and every day logic are bad. CRT in particular, condemns the Eighteenth-Century Enlightenment, which was so important to Unitarian Universalism and Humanism.

According to CRT, people are considered as categories, not as individuals. If you are not a person of color (POC), you are, by definition, a racist since you obviously belong in a category that contains racists. This is really a form of guilt by association. It's also disturbing to discover that some Theorists are even anti-Semitic and anti-Asian. When used by CRT, "structural racism" implies that all white people are racist and have arranged all of society to benefit them. Although the Reconstruction Era Constitutional amendments and the 1960s civil rights laws helped POC, Theory contends that these efforts to improve society are based on ulterior motives. Theory has taken on a religious fervor and demands belief.

Given that Theory asserts that the problems of society come from structural racism, this morning we will look at the basic structures of American life to see if CRT paints an accurate picture. First, we will look at the Founding and the Constitution, followed by the Civil War and Reconstruction; then the creation of the NAACP and, finally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, moving to the present day. We must ask ourselves what sorts of structures we want. "All are architects of fate...," as one of our hymns says.

Slavery has a very long history and was common in empires from China to Egypt, where Moses' people were held in bondage. Some Indigenous people, including the Cherokee, had slaves. Moreover, Imperialism itself wasn't only European. For example, when the Spanish conquered South America, they found two major Empires--the Aztecs, who themselves had slaves, and the Incas. The Unitarian historian William H. Prescott wrote early and well-known histories of these conquests, *History of the Conquest of Mexico and History of the Conquest of Peru*.

But Europeans were not uniquely bad. The Ethiopian Empire was a slave-trading empire lasting into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s PBS programs about the history of Africa reveal that the states of Africa captured their enemies and sold them to be taken to both the New World and other places in Africa.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that before there were black slaves in North America, there were white slaves, many of them children. Indentured servants were frequently treated as badly as slaves. It seems that white slaves were preferred, but most died within two years. In 1619 alone, two thirds of the white slaves died. Let's also not forget that Britain captured and transported the Irish and Scottish rebels and used the North American colonies as penal settlements just as they later did in Australia. The white slaves who survived probably entered the impoverished classes, particularly in Appalachia. Black slaves replaced white ones because they survived the hot climate and were, therefore, a better "investment". Importing convicts continued but was finally banned by 1789. Sadly, slavery still exists in Africa, among other places.

The American Founders believed in religious liberty and free inquiry, and some of them opposed slavery, including Unitarian John Adams and Universalist Benjamin Rush. Others held slaves and had the proverbial feet of clay, but there were also those who, like Thomas Jefferson, were uncomfortable with slave-holding but, nonetheless, depended on them for income. Although Jefferson had had earlier doubts about black intelligence, upon meeting the brilliant Benjamin Banneker, he was sufficiently impressed with the free black mathematician to hire him to lay out Washington, D.C. and hoped there would be more like him. As president, Jefferson was also instrumental in supporting the banning of the slave trade at the earliest possible time in 1808. Benjamin Franklin went from slave owner to president of an abolition society and petitioned for an end to slavery after he was introduced to very intelligent black children by the famous literary figure Samuel Johnson. Franklin also opposed racism and genocide against Indigenous people.

But all of that said, let me call your attention to the basic US structure. The concept of a central congress and executive was actually influenced by the People of the Long House, the five villages in New York that spoke similar languages. They had a form of democracy, and women helped make decisions. Leaders were similar to vote counters rather than authoritarian leaders.

The original U.S. Constitution did not claim that white people must be supreme. The words "slave" and "slavery" didn't appear in it; instead, synonyms were used. The Constitution took for granted that men would be voters and counted slaves as three fifths of a person, thus giving Planters one third more seats in the House of Representatives and a third more electoral votes, providing the South with more power. The original constitution (Article I, Section 9, Clause 1) stated that slavery could not be banned until 1808 (Article V) and prevented slaves from being protected by northern states (Article IV, Section 2). Following the original timing in 1807, Thomas Jefferson introduced a bill ending the slave trade; he later signed it, and it became law on January 1, 1808. They didn't have to campaign or worry about constituents.

Before the Civil War, there were UU efforts to aid Indigenous people. Emerson was among those who argued against the Cherokee land grab that resulted in the Trail of Tears. John Marshall had ruled that the Doctrine of Discovery did not give ownership of Indigenous land to the United States government, but that did not stop the government from taking the Cherokee land. We should remember this opposition and the court ruling since the Doctrine of Discovery has been held up as an evil and is a matter of current controversy. John Marshall, who ruled against government ownership, was an Episcopalian who attended the Unitarian Church in Washington. Some Cherokee, however, also had slaves and plantations, so we cannot say that they were totally innocent.

Leading up to the Civil War, there was also much discussion of slavery and ways to end it. In one famous instance, William Ellery Channing wanted to host the funeral of Charles Follen, a democratic rebel from Germany and an abolitionist. As a result, in the language of our time, Channing was "de-platformed." He offered his resignation, but the Standing Committee did not accept it, though he spoke only one more time. Unitarian John Quincy Adams ran into trouble as well. The former president, then in the House of Representatives, had argued the case of the slaves on the ship *Amistad* and had freed them. He insisted that the subject of abolition must be discussed, but Congress would not let him speak. Time after time he rose to address the issue but was silenced by what was called the "Gag Rule," which was imposed by the power of southern congressmen. Adams kept objecting until 1844, when it was abolished, but in 1848, he fell dead protesting against the Mexican War. The War was controversial, particularly because it made the extension of slavery into Texas possible.

The period of Reconstruction that followed the Civil War is called by the Pulitzer prizewinning historian Eric Foner, "The *Second Founding*." Although the Constitution did not recognize property in human beings, it did state that they were to be counted as less than other people. To correct that, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery, the Fourteenth established birthright citizenship and equality under law, and the Fifteenth tried to make voting secure for

black men. Unfortunately, the language excluded women. Former UUA Pres. John Buehrens at GA 2020 spoke about how difficult this exclusion was for Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. But for former slaves there was definite restructuring for those who had been freed, and there was aid and some measure of reparation resulting from the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau.

The Freedmen's Bureau erected hospitals and schools and provided food and medical care for former slaves. But its biggest success was in education. Now forgotten or unknown to most people, it really was an effort of restorative justice and reparation. It did not, however, give the land of the slave holders over to the freed slaves owing to President Johnson's veto. There were in other words some reparations, but the expectations were greater than the reality.

Unitarian and Universalist volunteers went south to work in the Freedmen's schools at a time when the First Klan was on the rampage fighting for the Lost Cause and its structural racism. It was dangerous to be a teacher trying to build a new and better educational structure in the South. Even with all the war losses and expenses, the AUA contributed as an organization to help those who had been freed. Those who worked with the Bureau discovered that the education of the white population was often just as bad as for the freed slaves, and they tried to improve or establish schools for them as well. Rev. Mayo, for example, worked to improve schools in Cincinnati. As we had done for the Union soldiers, we sent boxes of books for schools. Much of the aid was administered by AME churches just as our Service Committee in our time has worked through local existing organizations. We also supported what are now traditionally black colleges such as Wilberforce, Tuskegee, and Hampton. UUs have been criticized for acting as isolated individuals and donors, rather than as structural or institutional contributors. These efforts to support freed slaves weren't just individual; they were organizational. There is an entire forgotten history of UU schools, hospitals, and other voluntary organizations.

The last part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> was in many ways a dark time when, in the election of 1876, the defeat of Tilden by Hayes put an end to Reconstruction, and the pseudosciences of eugenics and Social Darwinism gained footholds. The Dunning school of history at Columbia left us with the myth of the Lost Cause, which gave us statues of dubious worth and questionable artistic merit that honored Confederate leaders and generals. The architecture of a better world began to be constructed only to be attacked as the South struck back through the Jim Crow laws.

The abolition of slavery had left a constitutional exception that permitted forced labor as punishment for crimes, allowing former slaveholders to criminalize their former slaves. The idea was simple: there were long sentences for misdemeanors, including loitering and indigence. The result of the criminalization of former slaves is precedent for the treatment of all POC as criminals. Vast prison farms, like the old plantations, returned with overseers on horseback carrying guns in the fields. Prisoners were put in chain gangs to be leased for work on roads. Felony sentences for prisoners also disenfranchised them--a disenfranchisement that has continued into our time. We must ask ourselves if the criminalization of former slaves resulted in the belief that POC are criminals, and whether we need the biggest prison system in the world?

The problems, prejudices, and evils of the post-Civil War era brought an equal and opposite reaction. UUs were active in the Anti-Imperialist League, opposing the annexation of the Philippines. Mary White Ovington, Ida B. Wells, W.E. B. Dubois, John Haynes Holmes, Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Harriot Stanton Blatch, and John Dewey were among those who established the NAACP. The turn of the century also brought the settlement houses, such as Chicago's UU Abraham Lincoln Center and Jane Adams's Hull House. First Universalist Church in Minneapolis sponsored Unity House, and there are other examples. According to Charles Lyttle in *Freedom Moves West*, it was during this period that UUs also worked to aid immigrants. many of whom settled in Minnesota where they created Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish communities. There was even an Italian Unitarian church that was started in Boston. It was also the time when we protested

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and organized to aid the Armenian survivors of what could be called the first modern genocide, which was carried out by Turkey. And Universalists and Unitarians rallied once again in Faneuil Hall.

UUs also had a continuing interest in the problems of Indigenous peoples. Helen Hunt Jackson was raised as Unitarian by her parents, and her father was a professor and minister who taught at Amherst. Her popular novel *Ramona* raised the consciousness of many Americans. Jackson's work was in the tradition of UUs Lydia Maria Child and Catherine Sedgwick, whose earlier novels had, with sensitivity and humanity, called attention to the plight of indigenous people. Jackson documented their mistreatment and the broken treaties in her book *A Century of Dishonor* (1881). She sent copies to congress with a quotation from Benjamin Franklin, "Look upon your hands they are stained with the blood of your relations."

When during the late nineteenth century there was the demand to exterminate indigenous people, UUs rejected genocide and endorsed assimilation. Today, there are those who believe that this was not the right solution, but it did mean that indigenous people would survive. As part of that effort, we built and staffed a school in Montana, where corporal punishment wasn't part of the program. When the school was closed, the families that it served were unhappy and wished that it had continued. Samuel Eliot, AUA president, backed assimilation, and although we may in our day have reservations about his views, he did support and defend indigenous people. He was also a founder of both the Urban League and the NAACP, and he criticized the justice system and treatment of POC. Though he can be faulted for failing to support women ministers and for closing struggling small churches populated by working people and farmers, Eliot was important in establishing an AUA Department of Social Justice and organizing interfaith assistance to children rescued from Hitler's Europe.

After WW II, there was a major shift in the American structure when, in 1948, Harry Truman ordered the Armed Forces integrated. Women also became full members of the armed services, but their participation was still limited until recently. My farm was not far from an air force radar base that required community businesses to treat its personnel equally.

The next significant change in structure occurred at the time of the Civil Rights Movement. One major Civil Rights leader was black activist Whitney Young, who received his PhD from the University of Minnesota and attended Unity Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., the UU historian, and UU Ted Sorenson were part of the Kennedy team before his 1963 assassination. UU Liberal Religious Youth had black leadership during this period when I attended their Continental Conference at Carleton College. Before the passage of the Voting Rights Act, UU Rev. James Reeb had been murdered in Selma in 1965. This act meant another change in the structure of society. By 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. had been assassinated as he prepared for the Poor People's March, and there were mass protests in the Twin Cities in which I participated. Then came the Black Power controversy, and the UUA's major donation for Black Empowerment brought it close to bankruptcy and dissolution.

In spite of UUA financial problems, churches continued to work against racism and for a better future. For example, UUs at Third Unitarian, where I studied Urban Ministry, worked to end redlining, blockbusting, and other forms of structural discrimination. The church also sponsored a community release program to keep teens out of the juvenile system. As POC moved into the neighborhood, they organized and demanded garbage collection and more & better policing. First Unitarian's multi-racial, multi-ethnic Chicago Children's Choir toured the country spreading its good news. In spite of threats, they kept going. They would come to sing and would stay in the homes of church members.

Even with the positive structural changes of the Second Founding and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, recent events have shown that there is much work to be done as problems stemming from racism still continue. NPR radio has reported that the net worth of some POC is as low as \$8.00. Although things have changed greatly, poverty has

persisted.

While we can examine ourselves and our language, the overwhelming majority of POC (80 percent) believe that politically correct language (PC) and Cancel Culture are not a solution. Nor do they want "theories". They yearn, instead, for practical solutions to problems, and they prefer to be understood as people, not categories. In general, anti-Racist training has made little impact; in some cases, it makes things worse. In contrast, the *Scientific American* tells us that studies since the 1960s have shown that better relationships between whites and POC have come from those who have lived together and recognized their common humanity. Black theologian Thandeka stresses our common humanity and argues for the power of love. She believes that shaming hurts people and that we must find a common salvation from the scourge of racism.

Since about 1990, the UUA adopted a strategy to get people to recognize and confess to their racism and think of themselves as part of a racist, white supremacist society. Often an analogy is drawn between racism and original sin, though most of those who adopt that view have long abandoned the concept of original sin as a theological or Biblical truth. In practical terms, one must ask if these programs and techniques actually work, especially since modern psychology shows us that people are more inclined to learn new behavior when rewarded. It's puzzling that this approach focused on guilt, shame, and punishment. According to the *Widening the Circle of Concern* report, the material was criticized as not being in keeping with UU Values and was defunded. According to Mark Morrison Reed's *Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy* we have been pluralistic throughout our history in philosophy and social concern. Can we really support programs that are not in accord with our pluralism?

In the end, we really need to look at better strategies that might be more in line with what science and our UU values tell us. Why must CRT be followed with perfect faith? It's not as if there has been no academic criticism of it, or that it represents the only acceptable viewpoint. In fact, in 1997, two University of Minnesota Law Professors wrote a scathing critique of CRT, *Beyond All Reason*, and analytic philosophers do not agree with CRT at all.

In closing, I would suggest that it's time that we explore other initiatives like the Chicago Children's Choir, which brought people of many backgrounds together rather than driving them apart. In full session, school buses would ferry children from their neighborhoods to First Unitarian. The choir performed with the Joffrey Ballet, the Chagall dedication and on tour with the Vienna Boys Choir. The choir continues as a large independent undertaking, as pictured on their current website, where hundreds of young people, wearing the choir's signature red jackets, form an ocean of real diversity.

The Chicago Children's Choir is one of many programs that can make a difference. I suggest that it's time to return to core UU values of free inquiry and open dialogue, rather than declare that there's only one way to fight racism. It's time to defeat racism as a community of individuals united in that cause, rather than as groups divided against each other by the categories that we have created or that have been created for us.

## **"Should be Re-Titled 'Exploitation of Identity'"**

a review by Dick Burkhart of

### **Identity Capitalism: The Powerful Insiders Who Exploit Diversity to Maintain Inequality**

By Nancy Leong (2021)

This book has a very bad title. It has little to do with "capitalism" as commonly known - the economic system of the West. It's closer to the concept of "capitalizing" on something of perceived value for personal gain, whether social or economic. Just think about the intricacies of identity politics, especially schemers both within and outside an identity group. Leong's opening example is about an institution which exploits its handful of people of color by inserting them into publicity photos to create a false appearance of diversity. I've seen this myself - think "virtue signaling" - yet surely she could have led with something more consequential and dramatic. I was also bothered by the fact that she identifies as Asian American but doesn't look it and seems to have taken advantage of her multiracial heritage - exploitation of identity from the inside.

Leong calls the "people of color" the "outgroup" with "white people" being the "ingroup", where normally the ingroup exploits the identity of the outgroup. Yet I found this terminology all too reminiscent of the "victimhood culture" terminology of "oppressor" and "victim", which transforms the wide variety of situations in the real world into destructive binary thinking.

In addition, Leong is deeply embedded in fashionable perspectives on race and misses the elephant in the room - how the huge "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI) industry has diverted attention from corporate-led escalating inequality, using divide-and-conquer tactics based on racial identity. I just read an article on how this "woke capitalism" continues to undermine multiracial solidarity among working people, with "white" people being taught to identify as racists and blame themselves, not the capitalism that exploits the vulnerable of all races.

In fact, the "white" working class has lost more ground economically over the last 40 years than any other group, despite the purported privilege of "whiteness" (they had more to lose). Not surprisingly, corporate DEI programs have a long record of failure ("Why Diversity Programs Fail" by Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev, Harvard Business Review).

However, Leong does capture some of the big exploitations of identity from the past, such as with slavery and women's suffrage. Then the slave owners would sometimes exploit caricatures of slaves to portray them as happy, willing participants who benefited from slavery. Opponents of women's right to vote would cite certain women, usually affluent women, who were happy to let their husbands vote for them, portraying these women as representative. Here we're actually seeing exploitation of manipulated identities. This continues today, often in the form of lingering stereotypes of many minorities, even new stereotypes in response to current events. But the Critical Race Theory stereotypes of "whiteness" show that not just minorities will be targeted when a larger divide-and-conquer purpose is served.

Leong emphasizes that exploitation of identity does not just serve interests of wealth and power, but also what many have called "social capital", though social capital, of course, facilitates both power and income. Historically, immigrants often sought "white identity" for these purposes. Today some seek black or tribal identity due to the benefits of affirmative action, diversity hiring preferences, or tribal membership. This, of course, signals that historically "disadvantaged" are no longer so



disadvantaged, complicating the "ingroup" / "outgroup" terminology. Leong does not deal in a balanced way with these phenomena, getting bogged down in identity politics without noting that most immigrants just want to assimilate into mainstream culture, if too old themselves, then certainly their children. This has proved true in the US even with many groups that have strong cultural traditions, such as ethnic Jews, because of the perceived benefits and opportunities.

Leong is more centered when she describes "identity entrepreneurs", who are actually just exploiters of identity who seek monetary capital directly, not just social capital. She includes those who some would regard as "sell-outs" to their identity group as well as outsiders who after a quick buck. For a liberal group, the former would include those who are happy to be "token" representatives of their group in return for a good paycheck, while the latter typically try to capitalize on a particular hot trend or fashion, such as in "black" music, or a popular movement, such as "environmentalists" focused on climate and ecology. But not surprisingly, DEI training is not featured here, with DiAngelo being the prime example of an identity entrepreneur, with her focus on elite white guilt.

One of Leong's major complaints about "identity law" is that the standard lists for non-discriminatory practices (religion, race, gender, ethnicity, etc.) do not include variations in personal styles (hair, garments, symbols, etc.). Such styles are very important to certain religious groups and very controversial (the Muslim hijab, etc.) but it's not clear how to handle these, or what they have to do with exploiting identity, except on a case-by-case basis. The issue of "cultural appropriation" is also fraught with difficulty, as identities could be manipulated then mocked or ridiculed or sold for profit, or they could be honored and freely shared. The example of the "Washington Redskins" was brought up, where some were inclined to the latter view (including the original owners) while others toward the former view (natives who remembered it as a pejorative from the era of westward conquest).

"Blackface" brought up a similar dichotomy – reflecting different historical memories. All this points to less finger pointing and more dialogue and mutual education across all issues of identity.

At the end of the book, Leong lists 4 principles to rectify wrongs of identity: honesty, apology, education, and authenticity. I would suggest that honesty and education come first and apology last, after the issues have been thoroughly cleared up. I should also note that she is often talking about official apologies, along with some kind of compensation to indicate authenticity. A prime example was the US government apology and reparations to Japanese Americans after their internment and loss of property during World War II. A similar coordinated apology and reparations has never been given to descendants of slaves.