

AN AFRICAN-CENTERED PERSPECTIVE ON WHITE SUPREMACY

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This article engages the idea of White supremacy and its ideological companion, racism, from the standpoint of critical analysis. What this article seeks to do is to reveal the nature of White supremacy as it has operated in the United States and in the United Kingdom. Using an African-centered paradigm, the article demonstrates that the existence of White supremacy marginalizes African people within both societies. Only by utilizing an agency analysis where Africans see themselves as subjects can White supremacy be overcome.

White nationalism was the basis of [European] slavery, and eventually, when slavery reached a saturation point, white nationalism invented another form of slavery called colonialism. And after colonialism they computerized colonialism with a form of racism.

—Clarke (1991, p. 268)

Throughout the last four and a half centuries, racism and white supremacy have continually threatened the existence of African people before, during, and after enslavement. These threats have forced Africans to modify their beliefs, thoughts, and behavior in order to survive on a planet where they are regarded as “Third World” people. Those who now claim to be members of “First World” are actually late comers to the human family.

—Browder (1996, p. 3)

Both John Henrik Clarke and Anthony Browder conceptualized the domination of White Europeans over peoples of African descent, their particular focus within a historical frame of reference. For both these African-centered scholars, White supremacy is inextricably interwoven with the notion and practice of White racism. Therefore, White supremacy is not something merely to be associated with White hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan of North America and the British National Party of the United Kingdom. On the contrary, White supremacy manifests in the social, economic, political, and cultural history of European expansion and the development of the New World. It is a history and experience that has a life span of more than 5 centuries. At the dawn of a new millennium, it can be confidently stated that the world continues to be largely maintained by various forms of White supremacy.

In considering the notion of White supremacy, this article will focus on four main questions: One, what is White supremacy? Two, how does it manifest itself? Three, can peoples of African descent overcome it? And four, is there hope for a future beyond the confines of White European cultural, political, and socioeconomic hegemony? These four questions form the basis of the discussion that will be framed within an African-centered epistemological perspective.

First, although Clarke and Browder each make references to the social realities of White supremacy and the concomitant racism, there is still a need to grapple with the extent to which it has negatively affected the lives of peoples of African descent throughout the world. Indeed, White European supremacy has many layers to it, layers that manifest in macro and micro terms. The outset of European White supremacy is not necessarily fixed, but Browder (1996, p. 10) suggested that its origin can be associated with the arrival of 12 kidnapped Africans, presented as a "gift," at the court of Prince Henry of Portugal in 1441.

The subsequent development of the European enslavement (first under the Portuguese and Spanish, later to be followed by Holland, France, Britain, and other Western European nations), based on the economic plantation system, led to what can be deemed as a global affront on African humanity—an African Holocaust. It is this

social history that is still plaguing contemporary human relations between peoples of African and White European descent (Robinson, 2000). Indeed, serious scholars would not divorce the legacy of European enslavement and colonialism from fully comprehending the present problems of racialized discrimination that is blighting, for example, urban Black communities across the Western world. The negative effects of White supremacy and racism are ubiquitous and manifold. Crucially, White supremacy was borne via the birth of the New World, and its ramifications have left cultural and socio-economic scars throughout the world where people of African descent reside (we could add other peoples of color, but the focus here is on African descended peoples in all their complexity). White supremacy is inextricably interwoven with the global cultural expansion of Europe from the 15th century to the present.

**UNITED NATIONS (UN) CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM,
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The recent UN conference on world racism, held in Durban, South Africa, is testimony to the destructive and divisive nature of globalized racism. Sadly, the UN conference was deeply divided regarding issues that attempted to discuss, among other things, the legacy of White European enslavement of Africans and the call for reparations. At the outset some of the major European nations, led by Belgium, were open to the idea of formally apologizing to those victimized by the enslavement process. However, Britain, backed by three other former enslavement nations, Holland, Spain, and Portugal, officially objected to a formal apology, stating that it could leave the government open to a lawsuit. An extract from the official UN conference declaration against racism reads:

We acknowledge that slavery and the slave trade, including the trans-Atlantic slave trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity, not only because of their abhorrent barbarism, but also in terms of their magnitude, organized nature and especially their negation of the essence of victims. (cited in *The Observer*, UK, September 9, 2001, p. 10)

Although European nations, led by the United Kingdom, did not yield to individually apologizing for their respective involvement in the enslavement process, mainly due to avoiding being criminalized, there is still an indirect acknowledgement to its devastating effect on African peoples and her descendants. This can be considered as progress, however small, given the many decades of official denial. Indeed, historical amnesia in regard to European racism that went hand-in-hand with enslavement (Fryer, 1984) has been a regular companion in the debate for African reparations (we will return to the reparations debate, from an African-centered perspective, in more detail below). At least now there is global recognition for the inhumanity that encompassed this form of European expansionism. This is the essence of what is often deemed White supremacy and its ideological companion: racism.

CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS OF WHITE SUPREMACY

What the UN conference against racism indicated is the deep-rooted and multifaceted compliance in White European exploitation of African peoples. We are in the embryonic stages of reconciling this historical reality. There is much more debate needed in regard to not only the historical oppression of African descended peoples but also the contemporary plight of so many millions caught up in a relative pauperization process. In the United States, for example, Andrew Hacker, a political scientist, deemed the North American experience in the 1990s as essentially having a “two nation” social structure: nations that are “Black and White,” “separate, hostile and unequal.” Hacker (1992) maintained:

Black Americans are Americans, yet they still subsist as aliens in the only land they know. Other groups may remain outside the mainstream—some religious sects, for example—but they do so voluntarily. In contrast, blacks must endure a segregation that is far from freely chosen. So [North] America may be seen as two separate nations. (p. 3)

Again, the endemic reality and longevity of racialized discrimination are apparent. Although the condition of any social group is usually more than complex, there is ample evidence that African Americans have faced and continue to face the legacy of enslavement. Along with Hacker, but in a socioeconomic and cultural sense, Randall Robinson (2000) poignantly surveyed the contemporary African American experience that is rooted in historical oppression:

[North] America's socioeconomic gaps between the races remain, like the aged redwoods rooted in a forest floor, going nowhere, seen but not disturbed, simulating infinity, normalcy. Static.

High infant mortality. Low income. High unemployment. Substandard education. Capital incapacity. Insurmountable credit barriers. High morbidity. Below average life span. Overrepresentation in prison—and on death row. Each cause and/or a consequence of a disabling poverty—of means and spirit—that has shackled all too many entire black family trees since the Emancipation Proclamation, as if the painful fates had been painted onto some antebellum canvas that had dried mean during slavery. Modern observers now look at the canvas as if its subjects were to be forever fixed in a fore-ordained inequality.

Of the many reasons for this inequality, chief of course is the seemingly virus of *de facto* discrimination that continues to poison relations between the races at all levels. (pp. 61-62)

Robinson's assessment of the contemporary African American experience leaves one in no doubt about the seriousness of the current plight facing mainly urban-based Blacks. Even African Americans who find themselves in a middle-class status are not immune to the realities of White supremacy and racism. Studies continue to show that there is a correlation between being of African descent and middle class and suffering racialized discrimination (Feagin & Sikes, 1994). Indeed, those African Americans fortunate to have a middle-class standard of living are usually achieving materially in spite of racialized discrimination. This attests to the spirit of African American resistance rather than the absence of racism in their everyday lives.

LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND, AND THE LEGACY OF RACISM

Along with the African American experience, there are many other examples of African Diaspora communities grappling with the legacy of White supremacy; Liverpool, England, offers one such case. Due to the city's involvement in the enslavement of Africans, it grew rich and became a major player in the development of the plantation economies in the Caribbean and North America. That is, specifically in the trafficking and distribution of enslaved Africans, in the exploitation of African labor for the production of raw materials, and in the development of industries and commerce directly connected to ships that carried enslaved Africans to their destinations in the New World. The city of Liverpool could not have grown into prosperity without its central involvement in the enslavement of Africans (see Christian, 1998; Fryer, 1984; Small, 1991; Walvin, 1992).

As a way of providing a platform for reconciliation, in December 1999 the Liverpool City Council formally apologized for the city's participation in the trans-Atlantic enslavement era and issued the following statement:

As its last formal act of the second Millennium, the City Council acknowledges Liverpool's responsibility for its involvement in three centuries of the slave trade, a trade which influenced every aspect of the City's commerce and culture and affected the lives of all its citizens.

Whilst bequeathing the city a rich diversity of people and cultures, learning architecture and financial wealth, it also obscured the human suffering upon which it was built. The untold misery which was caused has left a legacy which affects Black people in Liverpool today.

On behalf of the city, the City Council expresses its shame and remorse for the city's role in this trade in human misery. The City Council makes an unreserved apology for its involvement in the slave trade and the continual effects of slavery on Liverpool's Black community.

The first step towards reconciliation will be the basis upon which the city, and all its people and institutions, can grasp the challenges of the new Millennium with a fresh and sustainable commitment to equality and justice in Liverpool.

The City Council hereby commits itself to work closely with Liverpool communities and partners and with the peoples of those countries which have carried the burden of the slave trade.

The Council also commits itself to programmes of action, with full participation of Liverpool's Black communities, which will seek to combat all forms of racism and discrimination and will recognize and respond to the city's multi-racial inheritance and celebrate the skills and talents of all its people.

Again, the Liverpool apology for its role in the trans-Atlantic enslavement era is an open civic acknowledgement of how the past still affects the present. It endorses a position that African-centered scholars and commentators have been espousing for many, many decades. However, arguably it is only in the past decade that official acknowledgements from a European perspective have emerged.

Paradoxically, in relation to the city of Liverpool, the council has historically been a key factor in the widespread racial discrimination practices against the various Black communities. Moreover, this historical discrimination has led to the deeply rooted social exclusion of Liverpool-born Blacks in the contemporary sense (Christian, 1998; Gifford, Brown, & Bundy, 1989; Nelson, 2000; Small, 1991). Indeed, in a 1989 report on the extent of racialized exclusion in the city, Gifford et al. stated:

The three of us have between us long experience in London, Leeds, Bradford and Manchester. While racism is common in all those cities, we find the situation in Liverpool to be uniquely horrific. (p. 22)

More recently (Liverpool City Council, 2000), an equal opportunities review panel made up of seven councilors and seven Liverpool residents met between May 1999 and January 2000. Their task was to gauge how well equal opportunities were in practice in regard to the Liverpool City Council as a major employer and social service provider. Some of the key findings in the equal opportunities report were:

Liverpool City Council's practices are discriminatory. Liverpool City Council continues to exclude many people in its workforce. Individuals and communities do not receive a fair equal service.

Liverpool City Council has an appalling record on equal opportunities, with its image, its ethos and its culture. Liverpool City Council's day-to-day practices do not match its equal opportunities policies.

This latest report on equal opportunities has very familiar findings from that of past reports. Yet racial discrimination in the city continues to have an almost insuperable quality to it. It again testifies to the longevity of direct and indirect racism and legacy of White supremacy. Whether it is in Liverpool or Cincinnati, we find racialized discrimination against Black people of African descent apparent in all walks of life. Even in the present age of reconciliation, racism appears to be a ubiquitous reality in the social world.

WHITE PRIVILEGE IN WHITE MINDS AND EDUCATION

Interestingly, in line with the current White apology perspectives, a number of mainstream studies have emerged in the past decade that focus primarily on the meaning of White privilege (e.g., Allen, 1994; Berger, 1999; Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; Frankenberg, 1997; Rothenberg, 2002). What is particularly interesting about these studies is that they collectively speak about the day-to-day subtle realities of White privilege. However, collectively these studies fail to specifically consider the legacy of White European intellectual racism.

Although this relatively novel interrogation of White privilege is commendable and useful, it still does not go far enough in highlighting the way in which it has, for example, affected the production of knowledge in higher educational institutions in the Western world. What is more, there is little critical dialogue relating to the continued manipulation of minds to the ultimate benefit of White privilege and European cultural hegemony. This is a major oversight within the literature covering White privilege, and it is an oversight that ought to be considered more thoroughly by the predominately White scholars producing this research.

Indeed, making Whiteness visible and signifying it as being concomitant with power and privilege may help us understand, for example, why it is rare to get African-centered perspectives heard in mainstream academic circles. Surely it has something to do with power and cultural relations in the academy? Indeed, the gatekeepers of mainstream knowledge are still very much White and privileged persons. This is something not openly discussed, but it is a social fact. In regard to the issue of the general invisibility of White privilege, two contemporary White academics, Wildman and Davis (2002), had this to say:

The invisibility of [White] privilege strengthens the power it creates and maintains. The invisible cannot be combated, and as a result privilege is allowed to perpetuate, regenerate and re-create itself. Privilege is systemic, not an occasional occurrence. Privilege is invisible only until looked for, but silence in the face of privilege sustains its invisibility. (p. 89)

Wildman and Davis (2002) raised an important point related to how White privilege is invisible to those who do not look for it. A main theme in our discussion relates to the importance of African agency through the concept of African centeredness. Often those who have privilege fail to comprehend why those on the receiving end of it may protest about not having their share of cultural space. With this relatively new discussion surrounding White privilege developing more and more in the academy, it is only a matter of time before those who are blind to it will begin to see what the academics, Wildman and Davis, pointed out in regard to their privilege of being White professionals in the academy:

Generally whites think of racism as voluntary, intentional conduct, done by horrible others. Whites spend a lot of time trying to convince ourselves and each other that we are not racist. A big step would be for whites to admit that we are racist and then to consider what to do about it. (p. 95)

It may suggest above that these authors were actually alluding to themselves as being consciously racist, but this would be wrong

and one would miss the crucial nuance in their contention. They are simply acknowledging that just because one considers oneself not to be a racist does not necessarily mean that one does not benefit from the fact that one is deemed a "White person" in a society built on hierarchical and racialized social groups. White privilege is therefore interwoven into the social fabric of Western societies. It is evident in all areas of society if one actually takes the time to see the social reality of it. To comprehend the past and present contours of racism and White supremacy is to follow the trail of White privilege.

However, White privilege does not negate the relevance of conscious racisms. Indeed, systematic racism is still an important factor in comprehending the manifold social inequalities in Western societies. But White privilege is something that is also a relevant factor when it is considered within, for instance, higher education, and particularly surrounding the issue of cultural diversity and multiculturalism.

Another key issue in the role of White privilege in higher education has been the denial of and the centrality of other cultural histories besides that of the White European. A response from multiculturalism has been to try and correct the historical record via a revisionist approach. This has involved the promotion of other cultural histories to be taught and researched within the academy. More important is that these cultural histories and perspectives are taught and researched from the standpoint of the Africans, Chinese, Native Americans, Mexicans, and so forth. In a response to the critics of revisionist multiculturalism and African-centered perspectives, a Washington correspondent for *National Minority Politics*, Raynard Jackson (1994), stressed the importance of coming to terms with the past, and the exclusion of various cultural histories, for the long-term benefit of all:

Correcting mistakes made in this country's [U.S.] recorded history (whether intentional or unintentional) is not revisionism, but rather is merely acknowledging one's errors. I encourage the opponents of

multiculturalism and Afrocentrism to join me in the call to tell the truth. I dare you. (p. 12)

White privilege is certainly helping to unmask the hidden layers of power inherent in the interaction between designated White European cultures and the various Black/African, Asian, and Hispanic cultures in the United States.

In this sense, the standard White European image of others has come into focus in a historical and contemporary sense. There needs to be more research done by the White privilege theorists that can highlight the destructiveness of the European intellectual heritage that sought to elevate its cultural worth while denigrating cultures outside of its domain (Ani, 1994; Asante, 1999). This is how White supremacy is often a latent force within the confines of the academy. Latent in the sense that it appears on the surface to offer a liberal, broad-ranged, epistemological approach, but often concealed is a Eurocentric frame of reference for everything worth studying (Asante, 1999).

AN AFRICAN-CENTERED ANALYSIS OF WHITENESS

An African-centered scholar, Marimba Ani (1994), contributed a major work in the issue of unmasking White privilege and Eurocentric supremacist ideas masked often in liberal education. Her study offers more than 600 pages of analysis covering Western epistemology, as it relates to the varied intellectual racism espoused by many of the leading scholars of European thought. In following up a number of rather racist citations from the 19th-century French/German scholar, Joseph Gobineau, deemed the "father of racist ideology" (see Biddiss, 1970), Ani maintained:

Whiteness is central to the European self-image, just as their image of others necessarily involves "Blackness" or "non-Whiteness," as it is put negatively in European terms. This aspect of the European aesthetic helps to define the content of European cultural national-

ism, and white supremism, in this way, becomes identifiable as one of its most significant characteristics. (p. 284)

Ani contended that the European intellectual mindset has functioned in an ethnocentric manner, culminating with the exclusion of African and other cultures from the role of contributors to world civilization. For her, the White European intellectual narrative has ingrained within it the notion of White supremacy. Ani viewed this as a false idea, yet one that had devastating consequences for African descended peoples in particular.

Molefi Asante (1999) also recognized the consequences of White racism via intellectual discourse that failed to give peoples of African descent and other non-Africans their place at the table of contributors to world civilization. Even White writers, such as Peter Fryer (1984, pp. 133-190), extensively have delved into the legacy of British/European intellectual racism. Fryer poignantly stated,

Long after the material conditions that originally gave rise to racist ideology had disappeared, these dead ideas went on gripping the minds of the living. They led to various kinds of racist behaviour on the part of many white people in Britain, including white people in authority. (p. 190)

Regardless of the volumes of works available on race and ethnicity that clearly indicate the longevity of racist thought and practice, there continues to be a great amount of denial on behalf of the power structures to effectively deal with the cancer of racism that blights the lives of so many in so many societies across the globe.

In short, all indicators point to the social fact that racism is alive and kicking in most societies and most Western institutions. Sadly, it seems that as a societal disease, racial intolerance will continue to be a problem for the 21st century (Christian era). As such, those on the receiving end of it will no doubt continue to resist racism in all its various forms: from the subtle to the brutal.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WHITE SUPREMACY

African-centered psychologists, such as the late Bobby Wright (1992) and Frances Cress Welsing (1991), focused on the psychology of White supremacy. To put it another way, they attempted to more fully understand the illogical behavior and inhumanness associated with White racism. Bobby Wright was particularly forthright in his analysis of collective White European behavior in relation to peoples of color. In a radical critique of historical White European cultural behavior, he maintained that Black people of African descent are in mortal danger. In polemical style, Wright contended that White European behavior toward Black people is akin to the psychopath. A crucial aspect in his analysis related to the historical denial to accept, at times, the overtly oppressive behavior of White European power structures toward peoples of color. Wright stated,

Psychopaths' inability to accept blame and inability to learn from previous experience can be easily proven. They never accept blame for Blacks' environmental conditions which are clearly the result of White oppression. On the contrary, Blacks are held responsible for the deterioration of their communities even though all of the property is White controlled. (pp. 7-8)

Bobby Wright produced a candid and controversial critique of White European behavior; although unashamedly polemical, it deserves to be debated for its originality and boldness. I cannot endorse the notion of biological distinctiveness among human groups, but there is something tangible in the notion of specific cultural behavior. In this sense, Wright writes right. It is hard to disagree with the key themes in his argument, given the condition of Black males in inner-city environments and in terms of their treatment in Western prisons. Many other scholars agree with Wright's assessment, too, even though they may articulate the issue in less polemical fashion (Robinson, 2000).

Frances Cress Welsing (1991) also produced radical essays grappling with the notion of White supremacist behavior. As with

Wright, Welsing turned the key tenet of White supremacy on its head, which espoused the notion of Black inferiority to contend that the behavior of White supremacists is related fundamentally to a fear of their global numerical minority status. For Welsing, this was the reason people of color were largely excluded from positions of power throughout the Western world. Welsing stated,

The difficulty whites have in according non-whites socio-political and economic equality within the white supremacy structure stems neither from a moral issue nor from political or economic need, but from the fundamental sense of their own unequal condition- in regards to their numerical inadequacy and color deficiency. They can compensate for their color inadequacy only by placing themselves in socially superior positions. (p. 9)

Albeit controversial, this analysis referred to the idea of a latent fear of extinction, creating a normlessness in the behavior of many White people in positions of power. This in turn engenders either a passive or overtly aggressive and often abnormal behavior toward peoples of color. Both Wright and Welsing approached White supremacy as a behavioral inadequacy. How farfetched is such an idea? Can it be argued that the overall practice and legacy of White supremacy has been a positive good for humanity? Indeed, where in the world has the reality of European domination been of benefit to people of color? Questions such as the above ought to be considered by those critics who would ordinarily dismiss the theoretical positions of Wright and Welsing as essentialist posturing.

Regardless of the implied biological determinism inherent in the works of Wright and Welsing, there is something tangible in their collective works when it is juxtaposed with the history of White European expansionism and the creation of the New World that caused so much human misery for peoples of color.

Moreover, what can be gleaned from both the studies being produced by White academics and those already created by numerous African-centered scholars is that White supremacy is and has been a permanent fixture in the Western world for a number of centuries. It has also created a legacy of social exclusion among people of

color that has no place in genuine and authentic human relations. How we move on beyond this era of White Eurocentric domination of the globe will determine the future of positive racialized relations. One thing is certain, reparations as an issue will not disappear from the vocabulary and critical thinking of African-centered scholars. Indeed, no doubt it will be at the forefront of the debates for many years to come (Karenga, 2001; Robinson, 2001). If reparations can be resolved as an issue that suits those who were victimized by White supremacy and racism, then it will signal a brighter future for humankind.

AFRICAN REPARATIONS

At the heart of the recent UN conference on world racism was the issue of African reparations. The United States chose to leave the conference prematurely due to, *inter alia*, not supporting the contentious debate on domestic enslavement reparations. Yet how can there be a conference on world racism that does not consider the effects and legacy of the European enslavement era? It does not make sense to anyone connected to Black communities to logically ignore such a vital issue. At bottom the reparations debate is arguably the major issue of concern for Black communities globally. One can ignore it and deny it, but it will not go away. It is now on the agenda of Black communities in a global sense. The suffering of African people has gone on for too long without adequately dealing with the negative and deep-rooted effect that enslavement, colonialism, and neocolonialism have had on the peoples across the African continent and its African Diaspora. Until this issue is resolved, there will continue to be vociferous protest.

There is much that needs to be considered regarding the debate on African reparations. There is still a need to gather facts that will strengthen the argument for reparations. For example, it is not widely known that when the British abolished enslavement in the Caribbean colonies between 1834 and 1838 that the plantation proprietors were given a compensation package that amounted to

20 million in English sterling (Fryer, 1984, p. 43). One may consider, What would that 20 million sterling amount to in present currency? Many, many, many millions of dollars, I can assure you.

Interestingly, it is important to note that the emancipated enslaved Africans of the Caribbean received not a penny in compensation in 1838. Facts such as this coincide with the U.S. government's unfulfilled promise of "Forty Acres and a Mule" to be awarded to African Americans at the end of the U.S. enslavement era in 1865. Taking into account just these two historical facts, it seems likely that the struggle for reparations will grow rather than diminish. Regardless of the intransigence of the established order, descendants of enslaved Africans have a moral right to continue their quest for social justice on this pivotal issue.

In relation to the need for moral encouragement in the debate for African reparations, the former President of TransAfrica, Randall Robinson, is optimistic about the prospect of African Americans successfully winning the struggle for compensation. In a recent interview, Robinson (2001) stated:

I'm very optimistic [of African Americans gaining reparations]. I put no clock on these things, you see. I don't know if it will happen in my lifetime in the same way I didn't know if apartheid would end in my lifetime. . . . But you fight prepared for the long term, and if your life won't cover the term of the struggle, then you hand off your progress to the next generation. (p. 31)

Randall Robinson espoused an optimism that has aided the survival of African Americans throughout their history in fighting the forces of racism and discrimination. It is, however, a global concern for African-centered scholars on the continent and Diaspora to ensure that the moral argument for African reparations is made logically and forcefully.

Maulana Karenga (2001) maintained that the African reparations debate is foremost an ethical issue. Moreover, he suggested that it is imperative to frame and define the issue on the terms of peoples of African descent, and not by employing the definitions used by the established order. Terms such as *slave trade* or *trade*

merely “sanitize the high level of violence and mass murder that was inflicted on African peoples and societies” (p. 1).

Karenga rightly contended that if the issue of reparations is to be won, it must be on the ethical grounds that what has occurred to peoples of African descent amounts to a Holocaust of Enslavement and its legacy is profoundly limiting the life experiences of many millions of Africans around the world. Without carefully defining this important debate on the terms and conditions that relate to Africans, it will be a lost cause. That is, peoples of African descent should keep the debate centered within their worldview, and this will not be achieved using the terms and conditions set by the established order.

CONCLUSION

We need to understand further the depth and breadth of White supremacy and its ideological companion, racism. The extent to which peoples of African descent have suffered under this system has been discussed in historical and contemporary terms. Racism is alive and kicking in Western societies. How nations individually respond to it and come together to deal with this ubiquitous cancer will be crucial in combating the problem. Freedom from White supremacy and racism is something peoples of African descent have been fighting for for centuries. Presently, we still cannot confidently state that “we are free” in our societies (I am speaking of the United States and United Kingdom specifically, yet am aware that this point could be extended throughout the world).

Crucially, we are still not free from racialized oppression throughout the world. It has been and will continue to be an ongoing struggle to overcome the manifold forces: cultural, economic, and political. For peoples of African descent, an important aspect of our struggle is the struggle to define our worldview from within the various African-centered schools of thought. In this sense it should be our collective mission to keep alive the struggle of our ancestors on the continent of Africa and its Diaspora. We have a

massive task in terms of keeping our minds focused on simply keeping our minds.

Even though there are signs that progressive Whites are now beginning to consider issues such as White supremacy and privilege, generally the struggle will fall to African peoples to overcome the legacy of racialized discrimination. What is encouraging, however, is in the fact that progressive Whites are now acknowledging the often invisibility of their individual and collective privilege. With continued research and debate, this will prove to be a productive exercise.

African-centered scholars will no doubt spearhead the reparations debate. There is still much research to do and facts to marshal in order to strengthen what is already arguably the strongest case on the world stage for reparations. By framing the debate within Karenga's suggested ethics of the Holocaust of Enslavement, it will further strengthen the moral argument and eliminate the opportunity to sanitize this horrific historical crime against humanity.

Most important, White supremacy/privilege still prevails throughout the world. Sadly, the recent UN conference suggests that the established order will not yield to the benefit of humankind. Yet that should not deter those who are committed to social justice—it should in fact heighten the resolve to eventually overcome.

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