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## **The Unheard Word (First Edition)**

Center for Black Studies

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# THE UNHEARD WORD

Vol. 1, No. 1

A Publication of **BLACKS**

October, 1990

One Step -- Knowledge

One Path -- Wisdom

One Destination -- Understanding

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

For those of you who are currently bewildered at what *The Unheard Word* is or what **BLACKS** really mean, please allow an explanation.

**BLACKS** (Begin to Lift and Arouse Consciousness and Knowledge of Self) is a handful of African-American students at the University of Southern Mississippi, who want to promote awareness of African and African-American history, heritage, culture and current issues to our readers -- especially our peers.

**BLACKS** believe that information that is presented from an Afrocentric perspective is not as prevalent in our society as information that is presented from a Eurocentric standpoint. This lack of prevalence makes some African-Americans ignorant of their backgrounds and of current issues that could have direct effects on their well-being.

Some of us have lost touch or have never been in touch with who we are, because we have forgotten or have never known from whom and where we descended. We believe that all African-Americans must know our past to define our future.

Therefore, **BLACKS** feel that our peers in particular need -- not would like to have or should have -- information presented from an Afrocentric perspective. *The Unheard Word* is just that.

We hope that when our readers allow themselves to become completely absorbed in our publication, it will prove to be an exciting, enticing and enlightening experience.

Our motto says that the first step is to get knowledge. When we make the first step, we are on the path toward obtaining wisdom. When we understand what we know, we have reached the final destination.

Remember that *The Unheard Word* is only the first step. Together we can reach our final destination.

Since this is merely an introductory issue, our readers may have to strain their ears to hear the word. But in issues to follow, the word will resound loud and clear. **BLACKS** will greatly appreciate your support, for with your support the word can no longer go unheard.

## A LOOK BACK

*Historical events occurring in October*

### October, 1966

Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party in Oakland, Ca. One of its main goals was to gain reparations for past victimizations of African-Americans.

### October 20, 1967

A Mississippi federal grand jury returned the verdict in the trial of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, three civil rights workers who were murdered in Philadelphia, Miss. during "Freedom Summer" in 1964. ("Freedom Summer" sought to register African-Americans to vote in the 1964 presidential elections.) Seven men were found guilty on federal civil rights violations. Among them were the Chief Deputy Sheriff and the Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

### October 16, 1968

Tommy Smith, a gold medalist at the Olympics in Mexico City, Mexico and John Carlos, a bronze medalist, gave the black power salute with bowed heads after their victories in the 200 meter dash. They were suspended two days later.

### 20 Years Ago This Week:

Black Solidarity Day began on November 2.

*Birthdays of prominent African-Americans*

### October 17, 1817

Rev. Samuel R. Ward, an abolitionist and a gifted orator of pure African ancestry, was born in Maryland. He helped to fund the Anti-Slavery Society in Canada and published two anti-slavery newspapers in the United States.

### October 6, 1917

Fannie Lou Hamer, nicknamed the "First Lady of Civil Rights," was born in Ruleville, Miss. In 1964, she founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which challenged the all-white Democratic Party for its exclusion of African-Americans.

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## A WORD ON RAP

Rap music has moved to the forefront of today's music industry. This new style of music has been the center of much abuse and controversy, yet it still prevails. It has only slowly moved away from its street hardness into the realms of consciousness, upliftment and knowledge.

The one rap group that has become the most noted for this is the rap entourage named Boogie Down Productions, led by rapper KRS-ONE (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone). Each song attacks different issues and ills of society. For example, one song from a previous album is entitled "Why Is That?"

Some of the lyrics are as follows:

Why are young black kids taught wacked?  
They're taught how to read, write and act.  
You don't teach white kids to be black.  
Why is that?

Many may initially interpret this to mean something racist, but it doesn't. The attack here is on the educational system of America. America is the self-professed "Melting Pot." This means that it is made up of many nationalities, races, religions, etc. It's not suppose to be for a few but for everyone. Yet the educational system is geared more toward teaching one how to be an American. It teaches how Americans should look, act and behave. But it never teaches one how to be a human being. How to love and respect other people is never addressed or even thought about.

This song further points out that the history that is taught caters to one segment of the population: those of European descent. It faintly discusses the history of other civilizations. "Why is that?" If this country is to be the hub of many cultures, then it cannot continue to ignore the history of the many cultures that compose it. If one addresses knowledge of one segment of the population, then ignorance, fear, misunderstanding and disrespect are created toward other segments of the population. This cannot be merely changed by amending the Constitution and introducing bills into Congress. It begins in the schools, the church, the media, etc. The change must also come in one's heart and spirit.

## THEN AND NOW

*Civil rights organizations -- how they have reorganized their structures to help African-American youth.*

### **NUL (National Urban League)**

The NUL was founded in 1911 to help African-Americans make a smoother transition from life in the rural south to life in the urban north.

Today, under the leadership of John Jacob, the NUL provides community service programs that instill spirits of self-confidence and self-determination in youth. The NUL is achieving its goals through tutorial, counseling and mentor programs; drug programs; teenage pregnancy prevention programs; and by teaching young men to be responsible and to respect young women.

### **SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference)**

The SCLC was founded in 1957 to help African-Americans successfully integrate into American lifestyles.

Today, under the leadership of the Rev. Joseph Lowery, the SCLC tries to raise the self-esteem of youth by spiritual means. Their Liberation Lifestyles program challenges youth to seize traditional African values and to show initiative in their endeavors. The SCLC has also begun Wings of Hope, a drug crisis program; counseling and job training programs; and the Bread Basket, which persuades major corporations to do business with and within African-American communities.

### **NCNW (National Council of Negro Women)**

The NCNW was founded in 1935 by Mary McLeod Bethune to provide economic, social and educational welfare for African-Americans.

Today, under the leadership of Dorothy Heights, the NCNW focuses on issues affecting young women, such as teen parenting. The NCNW also sponsors career training, leadership and tutorial programs.

## BIBLICALLY SPEAKING

### *The Bible: Good Use or Abuse*

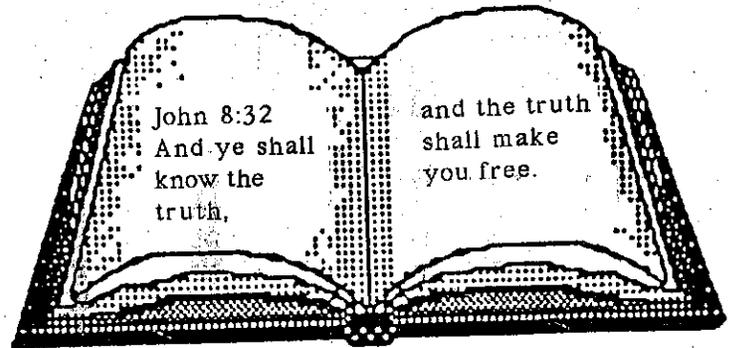
The Bible is often referred to as the world's best-selling book. There are few homes that do not have one. Every hotel or overnight lodging has one. But what is the Bible? Do we really understand it or do we casually read over certain passages and verses at our leisure? How many of us really read the Bible from cover to cover? Is the Bible being put to good use or is it just the victim of more of man's abuse?

Throughout recent history, the translation of the Bible has been the subject of much controversy. It is suppose to contain the true word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ and other prophets. These are the words by which it is claimed we should live. The Bible is suppose to be the guide to everyday living, thinking and behavior. Yet many have taken the teachings of the Bible and made them to mean what they want them to mean. What does this writer mean by this?

Example 1: Most of the European populous of the world has interpreted a particular passage in the Bible (Genesis 9:21-27) as being the divine creed of servitude for black people. It is often stated that black people are the descendants of Ham. Ham is the son of Noah who mocked Noah in his nakedness and drunkenness, and Noah cursed Ham and his seed to be servants of Shem and his seed. Now many anthropologists have labeled blacks as Hamitic people. Some of the same anthropologists have labeled Egyptians as Hamitic people but go on to contradict themselves by saying there is no kinship. It is of this writer's opinion that the black people of America and the western hemisphere are the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 15: 13-14) and that the European world has gone against God's spoken word (Exodus: 21:6).

Example 2: Many Euro-Americans have opposed and still do oppose integration. Once again the Bible is the tool to uphold this viewpoint (Deuteronomy 7). Of course this view is taken completely out of context. God is not talking to Europe or any Europeans. He is talking to the children of Israel who were delivered out of bondage in Egypt.

It has often bewildered this writer how any Euro-American or European can look to any of the books of the Old Testament for justification of their oppression of people of color. Europe does not figure anywhere in the Old Testament. The Book of Deuteronomy begins with "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red Sea..." None of the forementioned geographic areas are in Europe.  
(to be continued)



## MOTHERLAND MEMORIES

Mali was a grandiose African empire that flourished under the leadership of Mansa (Emperor) Musa I, who ruled from 1312-1337. The highly-civilized Malians lived under an established political system and possessed considerable wealth during a time when Europe was filled with uncultured thieves and warmongers.

Under Emperor Musa's leadership, Mali was the epitome of sophistication: men revered women; violence was virtually nonexistent; and equal justice was the principal goal of Malian government officials.

Mali's wealth consisted of many natural resources and crops: gold, silver, copper, salt, corn, cotton and millet, a cereal grass. In addition, an army of 100,000 kept the empire stable.

Emperor Musa was noted for his travels through parts of Africa and the Middle East. He made a pilgrimage to Mecca, as required of all devout Muslims. Enroute, he and his entourage passed through Egypt and graciously distributed gold and other forms of wealth to the Egyptians.

Musa's travels and deeds impressed European cartographers to such a degree that they were prompted to place Mali on an official atlas of the world. The accompanying inscription beside the map of Mali even read as follows: "This Negro Lord called Mansa Musa I...he is the richest and most noble king of all the land."

After his pilgrimage to Mecca, Musa prompted learned Muslims to return to Mali with him. These Muslims helped the city of Timbuktu flourish as a center for Islamic studies, and people from all over Africa came to Timbuktu to partake of the knowledge.

Mansa Musa I is only one example of prominent African royalty that **BLACKS** will present as a part of our rich history and heritage. Watch this space for more in-depth information on the continent of Africa.



Mansa Musa I

## Mali Today

**Capital:** Bamako

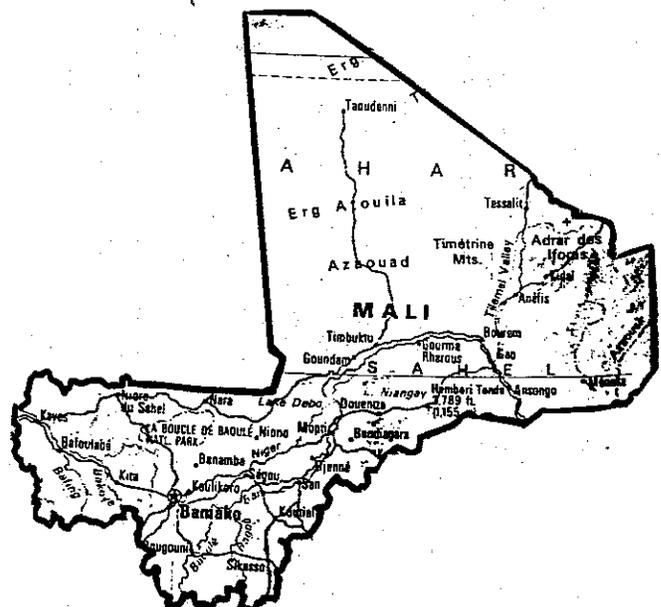
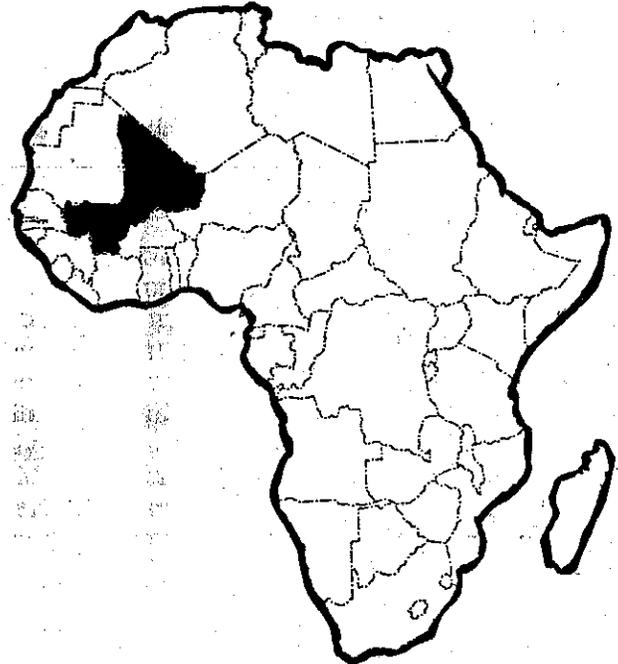
**Population:** 8, 278,000 (1990 est.)

**Language:** French

**Religion:** Islam

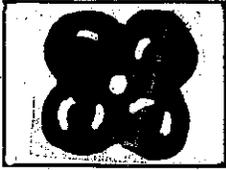
**Area:** 478,841 squ. mi.

**Flag:** vertical stripes of green, gold and red



### IT'S A SIGN

This Adinkra symbol represents aspects of the culture of the Akan people of West Africa.



Ntesie-matemasie.  
(I have heard and kept it.)  
Symbol of wisdom and  
knowledge.

## POINTS TO PONDER

### My Last Will and Testament

If I have a legacy to leave my people, it is my philosophy of living and serving.

Here, Then, is My Legacy...

I leave you love. Love builds. It is positive and helpful.

I leave you hope. Yesterday, our ancestors endured the degradation of slavery, yet they retained their dignity.

I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another. This kind of confidence will aid the economic rise of the race by bringing together the pennies and dollars of our people and ploughing them into useful channels.

I leave you the thirst for education. Knowledge is the prime need of the hour.

I leave you a respect for the uses of power. Power, intelligently directed, can lead to more freedom.

I leave you faith. Faith in God is the greatest power, but great, too, is faith in oneself.

I leave you racial dignity. I want Negroes to maintain their human dignity at all costs.

I leave you, finally, a responsibility to our young people. The world around us really belongs to our youth for youth will take over its future management.

-Mary McLeod Bethune-

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Louis Latimer* designed the plans for Alexander Graham Bell's telephone. Latimer also improved the carbon filament in Thomas Edison's light bulb and invented the electric light.



*Garrett Morgan* invented the first automatic traffic light, the gas mask and a belt fastener for sewing machines.



*Benjamin Banneker* made the first clock in the United States. The clock was constructed entirely out of wood. He also wrote the first almanac and helped design the blueprints for Washington, D.C.



## THINK ABOUT IT

"We cannot fear to speak the TRUTH even if death faces us; for it is better to die a man speaking the truth than to tell a lie to please the people in their ignorance."

-Minister Louis Farrakhan-

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Who coined the phrases "Black is Beautiful" and "Black and Proud?"

Who was the first African-American to run for the presidency?

Who was the first African-American to be elected to public office in the United States?

*(Answers will be provided in the next issue.)*

## INQUIRIES

Do you have any questions or comments about **BLACKS** or *The Unheard Word*? Please contact Riva Brown and Ulysses Milton at Southern Station, Box 8833, Hattiesburg, MS 39406.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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**BLACKS** send out a very special thank you to Tom Boss at the Adult Education Station for allowing us to use his facilities and equipment to make our publication appear presentable.

### Sources:

Afro-American Encyclopedia; A Salute to Black Scientists and Inventors; A Salute to Historic African Kings and Queens; A Salute to Historic Black Firsts; Ebony Magazine; Free at Last; Shining Legacy; The Ebony Handbook; The Negro Almanac: A Reference Work on the Afro-American and The World Book Encyclopedia

