

Environmental Racism
by
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Environmental Racism is a term coined by Dr. Benjamin Chavis in 1983 when he was with the United Church of Christ. The term refers to the targeting of a specific population for abnormal exposure to harmful material. At least 16 studies since 1980 have concluded that race, not class or socioeconomic level is the determining factor in locating polluting facilities and waste sites. The last study to draw this conclusion was done by the E.P.A. in 2018. The term "environmental racism" is no longer used frequently but has been replaced by a phrase which is less accurate but more comfortable and accepted by those who commit the actions that define environmental racism.

The accepted term is "Environmental Justice" which is defined as fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulation and policy. Again, Environmental Justice is a "watered down" concept that was changed from Environmental Racism for the comfort of some people.

Respect for the environment goes back more than five-thousand years to ancient Afrika. In fact, the word "nature" comes from the word ntr or "netcher" in Kemet (ancient Egypt) and means "aspect of God".

In ancient Afrika, regardless of era and location, there has always been a reverence for the environment and nature. The earth, air, and water were personified as Geb, Shu, and Tefnut who were divine ancestors of humanity. Afrikan people have always (until fairly recently) honored and respected their ancestors, so it is certain that Geb, She, and Tefnut were accorded significant respect and reverence. Despite the obvious technical excellence that these Afrikans possessed (they built the pyramids and we still don't know how and probably can't do it better), there is no evidence of frank pollution or of a problem with wastes.

Only recently has there been any change in that fact and the change

relates to our thought processes being altered because of the socialization and education that we've been given (see Carter G. Woodson's *Miseducation of the Negro*) as well as the religion that we've been given (see Josef ben Jochannon's *Afrikan Origins of the Major Western Religions*).

Unfortunately, in today's world, the people in charge have no such historical tradition of respecting nature. In fact, from their Ice Age beginnings, they were forced to fight nature so that even now, they continuously attempt to defeat nature. The technical "progress" that has been made has usually been at the expense of the environment, the earth, air, or water (Geb, Shu, and Tefnut). This progress, if it can be truly called "progress" at all, is what Michael Bradley in his book, *The Iceman Inheritance* calls 'future limiting'. With the rapid accumulation of hazardous and toxic wastes, the accumulation of nuclear wastes that will last for thousands of years before they degenerate, the poisoning of the air and water by industry and machines, our grandchildren's grandchildren will possibly be confronted with an extraordinarily bizarre and filthy world that may kill them or cause changes (mutations) into something that cannot be imagined.

There have been "mainstream" environmental organizations that have made attempts to decrease pollution. They are: The Sierra Club which was founded in 1892 in San Francisco, CA and is now headquartered in Oakland, CA. Its purpose is "preservation, protection and enhancement of the natural environment". It numbers more than 700,000 members nationwide. The other "mainstream" environmental organization is Greenpeace, which is an NGO (non-governmental organization), founded in 1971 in Vancouver, Canada to "ensure the ability of the Earth to nurture life in all its diversity". It has offices in more than 55 countries and its headquarters is in Amsterdam. It has over 250,000 members in the United States and 2.8 million members worldwide. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a federal agency "whose *mission* is to protect human and environmental health" by "creating standards and laws promoting the health of individuals and the environment." The administrator of the EPA answers to the president of

the United States. Most recent [residents have proposed budget cuts to the EPA. Despite the stated mission of the EPA, according to the acknowledged experts in environmental racism (Robert Bullard, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha and Beverly Wright), *"Yet getting government to respond to the needs of low-income and people of color communities has not been easy, especially in recent years when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has mounted an all-out attack on environmental justice principles and policies established in the 1990's. Environmental injustice results from deeply imbedded institutional discrimination and will require the support of concerned individuals, groups and organizations from various walks of life."*

What can we do, then? Isn't there a price to pay for progress? The answer to the second question lies in whether technology that comforts now but results in death and destruction later can be really called progress. We need to realize that most of the hazardous and toxic wastes are located near Afrikan communities. In fact, 60% of AUSA live in a community with at least one abandoned waste site and 75% of toxic waste dumps in America are located in communities predominately populated by people of color. AUSA are 79% more likely than whites to live in neighborhoods where industrial pollution is suspected of causing the greatest health problems. People of Color (AUSA, Latinx and Native People) are the majority of people living in neighborhoods located within 1.8 miles of America's hazardous waste facilities. Existing laws have not been enforced in order to reduce health risks for those living in or near toxic "hot spots".

Also, not only does the Federal government give polluters in European American communities higher fines than those in Afrikan American communities, but it moves 20% slower in cleaning up toxic contamination in communities of color. These facts strongly suggest that this is no accident! In fact, in a 1987 study, The Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ found that race and not socioeconomic factors is the determining factor in locating polluting facilities and waste sites.

We also know that the life expectancy of Afrikan people is shorter than European Americans and that the incidence and death rate of many

types of cancer are increasing in Afrikan Americans while decreasing in European Americans. The cause for this discrepancy is very hard to find because adequate records are not kept. I am not aware of a national cancer registry that can be studied to find out whether there are any similarities in various areas regarding cancer (such as whether the victims live near a waste site, nuclear facility or polluting industry). In a nation seemingly obsessed with obtaining and controlling information, this would strongly suggest intentional destruction of life or genocide.

The word, genocide, frequently gives rise to accusations of paranoia from those committing or defending the acts (or those to blinded or mentally enslaved to see). However, when the historic relationship of Afrikan people with the Kidnappers, Enslavers, and Oppressors of Europe and America is taken into account, there is good reason for some healthy paranoia. When we consider enslavement, lynching, The Tuskegee Experiment and other experiments on AUSA (see Harriet Washington's *Medical Apartheid*), the genocidal attempts to eliminate Native Americans and Australian Aborigines, the actual elimination of the Tasmanians, and recent revelations about nuclear and radioactive experiments on unsuspecting Americans it could be said that any Afrikan American who is not paranoid to some degree is not mentally normal.

We need to become aware of what is being done to us. We cannot depend on the mainstream environmental groups because they are made up of relatively wealthy Europeans and European Americans who operate on the NIMBY principle (Not In My Back Yard). They want to keep the pollution away from their homes and families and schools and workplaces. At best, they believe in environmental equity or environmental justice, which supports a value system that still blindly produces toxic substances that have to be stored in the name of progress. In this case, the land, water and air (Geb, Tefnut, and Shu) will still be poisoned but everyone will share in the poisoning equally. Is it realistic to believe that the people who participated (actively and/or passively) in the greatest holocaust known to mankind, the Afrikan Holocaust, will voluntarily expose themselves to death and destruction because of a sense of fairness?

To paraphrase Michael Bradley from the Afterword of his book, *Chosen People from the Caucasus*, Afrikan people have to reject all of what we have been taught by our Kidnappers, Enslavers and Oppressors and get back to our original values, interests and principles (Dr. Leonard Jeffries Afrikan V.I.P.) because only we have the capacity to save the world. Does this mean that we have to start over and give up many of the conveniences and comforts that we have become accustomed to? If we want our grandchildren's grandchildren to survive, we have to. Think about it. The time is short. Its later than you think! Food for thought!