

Why blacks remain in social degradation

Now that white racism is intellectually dead, cultural relativism is crippling them

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THE END OF RACISM:
Principles for a Multiracial Society
 By Dinesh D'Souza
 The Free Press, New York
 724 pages; hardcover; \$40.00

Dinesh D'Souza, a young immigrant from India to the United States, perfectly typifies the American melting pot. Although he comes from a Catholic family, converted long ago by Portuguese missionaries, his wife is a white Protestant woman from Louisiana with a touch of American Indian in her ancestry. His widely read first book, *Illiberal Education*, was an incisive look at political correctness on American university campuses. This one will further enhance his reputation as a compelling new voice of American conservatism.

At one level the book is a gold mine of information about the history of race relations. We learn that free blacks owned substantial numbers of black slaves before the Civil War, and that black African princes protested the

end of the slave trade as threatening their revenues. We also discover the contemporary pseudo-science of Afrocentrism and its associated "melanin theory," which purports to explain why blacks, as "sun people," are so much more intelligent and moral than whites, the "ice men." You'll never read these things in the *Globe and Mail!*

Racism is not merely ethnocentric suspicion of strangers; it is the attribution of biological inferiority to another race. In this sense it originated in Europe's "age of discovery," as Europeans applied the idea of white superiority to explain the huge gap between their own civilization and what they encountered on other continents.

In the 19th century, Darwinian evolutionary theory and developments in anthropology



Uncivil rights: From one segregation to another.

enriched it in scientific thought. The timing was perfect for scientific racism to serve as an ideology for repressing the newly liberated American slave population.

But a 20th century intellectual counterattack came from the anthropologist Franz Boas and his many brilliant students. Against the received notions of the superiority of civilization over savagery, the Boasians positioned the equality of races and the functional equivalence of cultures. All cultures were equally good adaptations to different environments; no universal standard of value existed by which they could be ranked.

Scientific racism could have been attacked on its own demerits, of course, without summing up the equally perverse idea of cultural relativism, which came to dominate the liberal wing of public opinion and had a fatal influence on the civil rights movement. On the positive side, its critique of racism effectively undermined the rationale for segregation of blacks. On the negative, its rejection of standards of cultural worth has produced disastrous effects.

First, cultural relativism quickly drove the civil rights movement from demands for legal equality to demands for reverse discrimination enforced by an activist government. If blacks were racially equal to whites, and their culture just as good, their slow pace of advancement—in science and scholarship, business and the professions—could only be due to political repression, i.e. white racism. Thus, just as white racism was quickly declining in American society, and equality of opportunity becoming a reality, the civil rights movement began to insist on school bussing, affirmative action, and racial quotas in every sphere of life.

Second, the dogma of cultural racism undermined the teaching of people like Booker T. Washington that blacks must lift themselves up. The present "culture" of the black underclass (70% of children illegitimate; one third of young men in jail or on parole; rampant alcoholism and drug addiction) needs condemnation and reformation, not sympathetic understanding from relativist liberals. Whatever the role of white racism in the remote origins of this destructive way of life, it is now self-perpetuating. Whites are involved only in that they fund it through welfare payments and try to contain it through policing. Otherwise they try to avoid it as much as possible.

Thus white racism, which once kept blacks in bondage, now serves as an excuse for blacks to keep themselves in degradation. Other non-white groups, from Koreans to Cubans, quickly rise in American society; the black underclass sinks ever deeper into its slough of pathology. Salvation will require a moral revival such as Protestant evangelism wrought in the English working class, or Roman Catholicism among the Irish immigrants to America. Meanwhile cultural relativism still prevails, pervasively insisting that the destructive culture of the ghetto is just part of the rich panorama of multiculturalism, while failure to prosper is caused by white racism.

All of which explains the title, *The End of Racism*. Racism is intellectually dead, and white racism has become increasingly peripheral in

'It is the civil rights industry which now has a vested interest in the persistence of the ghetto, because the miseries of poor blacks are the best advertisement for continuing programs of racial preferences and set-asides.'

America. But as long as blacks cling to the myth that this is what still holds them down, they will never enter that promised land of which Martin Luther King Jr. spoke so eloquently: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character."

This is a well researched book, highly readable (despite its length) and thoroughly provocative. It is a major contribution to the tough-minded debate on race that is emerging south of the border. It will also help Canadians to understand the very similar problems of our large and growing native underclass, which is also impeded by cultural relativism from reforming itself.

—Tom Flanagan