

"Changing Population age structures and sustainable development";

Abstract

In keeping with the 2017 theme, "changing population age structures and sustainable development" this written statement to the Commission on Population Development requests the arrangement of an empirical assessment instrument to formally define the unique sociopolitical and cultural characteristics of, acknowledge the existence of, and designate in a fully geopolitical context, Indigenous and African descendants of colonialism and enslavement in the United States, a 'people group'. Specifically, the request affirms the following as prerequisite: (i) colonialism and enslavement in the United States is a historical fact and Indigenous and African descendants were disproportionately reflected in the enslaved population for more than two centuries; (ii) the legislative erasure, physical genocide and cultural homogenization that was inflicted upon this population for three centuries has resulted in a unique ethnolinguistic identity that is not found anywhere else in the world community; (iii) as such, it is necessary to designate and formally acknowledge the legacy of human atrocities against this group as well as the residual effects that are realized in human rights violations that continue until today.

The historical failure to identify this group by formal designation has resulted in an ambiguity of their existence and mythological caricature of their experience. The history spans more than 400 years, but the now quite aged first generation descendants of the last enslavement era survivors are still alive today. The rise of extreme nationalist agendas in many western nations, makes it imperative to state by resolution that their descendants do exist. Even for the descendants themselves, the desolation and anguish is often better perceived than comprehended, despite that they represent the physical embodiment of history preserved.

Purpose

The ethnic identity of Indigenous and African descendants of colonialism and enslavement is unique in the historical, geopolitical context of the United States. Although the descendants of colonialism and enslavement in the US often span a tri-cultural spectrum that includes Indigenous, African and European ancestry, it is the forced amalgamation of these people, by policy and legislation which resulted in a unique and distinctive group, also set apart precisely due to their "Indigenous and African" origins. The stripping away of ethnic identity and sinister intent behind the fusion of Indigenous people and African people over 3 centuries resulted in the formation of a new and distinct ethnic people group in the United States. The effect of such is a duality of cultural experience that is unlike those of European descent or post-enslavement African and Caribbean immigrants. This people group is a wholly American invention and yet, are not fully recognized as American. They are pre- and post-colonial; yet have no claim to territory, and no acknowledged connection to the investment of their ancestors. They have served their country with distinction in every generation even in the face of unfathomable atrocities. Their handprints are found in every sector of public life; in trade and professional, academic and philosophical, spiritual and secular and yet aside from a generic adjective or tangential assignment of continent; in the geopolitical context of their identity, they are invisible. The national social standard which identifies this people as "black", a common global adjeci, or "African American", a continental assignment, pose no significant problems in the national discourse, but they do not effectively communicate this segment of the population's unique identity to the world community; a group whose

very right to exist as members of humanity has been a national debate from the foundation of the United States. Formal designation reaches beyond the 'name' by which they are referred but speaks to their uniqueness and the historical significance of how they came into being in the United States.

Model Development Process

In keeping with the stated purposes of the Commission on Population and Development to “arrange for studies and advise the Economic and Social Council” on “population issues and trends” and in the “provision of population assistance” to developing countries, and “any other population and development questions on which either the principal or the subsidiary organs of the United Nations or the specialized agencies may seek advice”, the United Nations, ECOSOC accredited NGO, the United States Sustainable Development Corp, respectfully requests that an appropriate recommendation be made by affirmative resolution to the Council on the basis of integrated consideration of related reports and the aforementioned assessment instrument.

The assessment instrument and resulting report will be grounded in secondary data except for primary data collected for testimonial support. 'Quantum blood theory', 'one-drop rule' or other historical methods of racial classification are recognized as pseudo-scientific inventions of the European American colonial construct, are consequently invalid and will not be considered. Likewise, given the historical reality of genocide and homogenization, the volume of melanin is also not a determining factor for being considered an Indigenous and African descendant of Colonialism and Enslavement.

Analysis of genetic markers that disclose Indigenous and African ancestry coupled with birth, death, census, tribal and other official records that reflect biological ancestry that precedes the Civil War are all accepted forms of identifying the population. Exclusion of post-Civil War immigrants to the United States from the assessment does not diminish the solidarity with their experiences in and contributions to the United States; the shared history and cultural tradition is significant and invaluable. Yet as important and similar as are the two historical legacies, they are nonetheless different in their tradition in the United States. Oral tradition is accepted, but should be coupled with one or more of the criteria. Output should reflect a basic demographic data set about the population e.g., age, gender, etc. Typical ethnic indicators including cultural tradition, language, geographic proximity, the existence (or not) of faith affiliations, social and political values will all be considered to define the population.

Definition of People Group

As individuals may identify with this unique ethnic group simply by documenting Indigenous and African ancestral origins that precede the Civil War, the 'people group' itself will be defined by legislative record and academic sources. With the institution of enslavement evolving over decades by policy and legislation, history provides a most perverse gift in unfolding who the people were and how they came to be who they are. The early colonial, academic and other American public records are replete with insight to the history of forced amalgamation of cultures. An example, a November 1682 colonial Virginia mandate of the House of Burgesses that effectively removed ethnic identity from and combined Indigenous and African people into a single racial classification of “negro” for the purpose of enslavement. “And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that all servants except Turkes and

Moore, whilst in amity with his majesty which from and after publication of this act shall be brought or imported into this country, either by sea or land, whether Negroes, Moors, Mollattoes or Indians, who and whose parentage and native country are not christian at the time of their first purchase of such servant by some christian, although afterwards, and before such their importation and bringing into this country, they shall be converted to the christian faith; and all Indians which shall hereafter be sold by our neighbouring Indians, or any other trafiqueing with us as for slaves are hereby adjudged, deemed and taken to be slaves to all intents and purposes, any law, usage or custome to the contrary notwithstanding." In that region, for the next two centuries until well into the 20th century marked by the end of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, Indigenous and African descendants of colonialism and enslavement simply ceased to exist as anything more than 'negro' and/or 'slave'. This gross miscarriage of justice must be acknowledged and rectified to the fullest extent possible.

Definition by Territory

There is some evidence of historical acknowledgement of this people as a defined ethnic group from the United States government. Prior to the end of the Civil War, newly freed enslaved people were offered a settlement by Union General William Sherman, in which they would receive headright land grants in the same way that early European colonist had received more than two hundred years before. As it was war-time, he was not authorized to convey more than possessory titles to the land and immediately following the death of Abraham Lincoln, they were removed from the land which was conveyed to European citizens. Nonetheless, the precedent of acknowledging the descendants of colonialism and enslavement as an 'affected group' in the nation was established. From that point forward, most legislation was discriminatory and segregationist by melanin, and the sociopolitical characteristics that defined the people beyond that single indicator was lost to history.

Conclusion

Finally, it also necessary to distinguish this group from fully Indigenous and fully African people groups. The methodology that was employed to erase the cultural diversity of people with melanin in the United States from the social political fabric of the nation was deliberate and spanned centuries. This process is a step toward uncovering that history and memorializing those ancestors by the very existence their descendants.