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Introduction

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Introduction

by
James Jennings

This issue of the *Trotter Institute Review* is devoted to a two-part proposition. The first is that institutions, agencies, businesses, and schools must begin to reflect the increasingly diverse ethnic and racial characteristics of American society. America is in the midst of a demographic revolution. It is unfortunate that some educators have chosen to ignore the social, economic, and intellectual implications of this change and that others have even become angry and attacked efforts to create an appreciation of multiculturalism.

This unfortunate resistance to the implications of America's unfolding demography leads to the second proposition reflected in this issue of the *Trotter Institute Review*. That is, institutions of higher education have a unique professional and moral responsibility to help lead the nation to its next stage of social and economic development. This leadership will not be forthcoming if the issue of diversity is ignored. America will not develop if the contributions of people of color continue to be dismissed. We can no longer delay the building of a multiracial, multicultural society—as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “We are faced with the fact that tomorrow is here today.”¹

The articles in this issue of the *Trotter Institute Review* present information about tomorrow while offering suggestions for what can be done today to produce a stronger, healthier, and more democratic American society. The first article is based on a content analysis of catalogues from teacher preparation schools and programs in Massachusetts. The study showed that school catalogues and bulletins, important marketing and recruitment devices, virtually ignore any suggestion that future teachers should be made aware of or trained to respond professionally to the changing racial and ethnic diversity of students in the public schools.

The next article, by Martin Kilson of Harvard University, examines a recent book that is critical of affirmative action. Professor Kilson has written on the issue of race and class for more than three decades. His article highlights inconsistencies in the argument raised by law professor Stephen L. Carter in his book, *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*.

Bill Farrell's article suggests how contradictory it is to discuss “great books” or “great ideas” without considering the contributions of people from all ra-



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cial and ethnic backgrounds. Unless one is simply narrow-minded, backward, or ignorant about history, how is it possible to purposefully exclude such an internationally renowned scholar and thinker as W. E. B. Du Bois? As Farrell points out, this is exactly what Encyclopedia Britannica has done in its series on the *Great Books of the Western World*.

Clinton Jean shows that the earlier lexicon defending Eurocentric arrogance has given way to new phrases. There was a time when one could speak of Aryan superiority, as did President Theodore Roosevelt, or the “Manifest Destiny” of white people, but today, use of such a lexicon is no longer acceptable—as has been realized by David Duke. Dr. Jean points out how terms like “individual freedom,” “merit,” and “reverse discrimination” are now used instead to defend an outdated social structure.

I am especially pleased to be able to offer the last article, an interview with the first black person to be elected to the Boston School Committee in this century. Mr. O'Bryant has dedicated his life to excellence in public education for the sake of *all* children. We end this issue of the *Trotter Institute Review* with this particular article because it reminds us again of Dr. King. In the final analysis, the response of American higher education to the challenge of racial and ethnic diversity will have a profound impact on the children in our society who represent our future. How we prepare them today, for the challenges of tomorrow, will affect all of us: indeed, “. . . tomorrow is here today.”

Notes

1. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Chaos or Community: Where Do We Go from Here?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).