

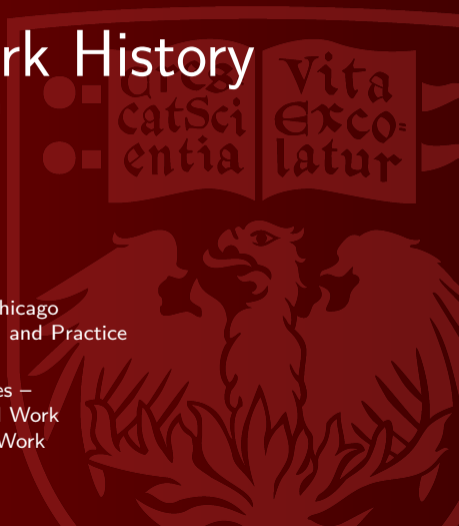
Black Contributions to Social Welfare & Social Work History

A Legacy of Black Self-help, Resistance, and Liberation

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– Equity & Inclusion Speaker Series –
University at Buffalo School of Social Work
Boston University School of Social Work
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Before We Start

A few comments

1. This presentation is a review of Black social work history
2. Discussion of how I have incorporated it into my anti-racism work
3. I use a critical historical view of social work's history
4. Statements and points I highlight are towards the profession in general
5. Not all authors of texts hold same views



Outline

- 1 Our Past
- 2 Black Social Work
- 3 Black Traditions in Social Work
- 4 Black Thought in Social Work
- 5 Black Social Work Leaders
- 6 Our Future

Our Past



My Research Guide

Black Contributions to Mutual Aid, Social Welfare, and Social Work History

- Started guide in my doctoral history of social work class
- Revised as I read through texts and did further searches
- Resources freely available through library, interlibrary loan, HathiTrust, and Internet Archive
- Older books purchased cheap from used book stores
- Shared on [Prof2Prof](#) and [Twitter](#) (@JustinSHarty)





Black Social Welfare & Social Work History

This history is devalued and omitted by dominant Eurocentric social work

Skipping over Black Social Work History

It is indeed peculiar to find that although most histories of social work go back to the English Poor Law, *they skip over the helping tradition of blacks during slavery, the Underground Railroad movement, the abolitionist movement, and even the Freedmen's Bureau, which was the first massive governmental effort at caregiving.* (J. M. Martin and Martin, 1985, p. 7)

The Need to Document Black Social Work History

This textbook [Ross, 1978] was devised and *developed as a corrective for omissions and deficiencies in the existing literature on social welfare, and especially by the absence of any extensive body of materials illustrative of the black heritage and experience in this area of knowledge* (J. M. Martin and Martin, 1985, p. 7)



The Limits of Social Work Care and Help

Is social work a caring and helping profession to all?

- Historical evidence suggests not for Black people
- Racism in social work has historically affected our...
 - Practice
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Research

Dominelli, 1989.

new community 15(3): 391–403

April 1989

An uncaring profession? An examination of racism in social work

Lena Dominelli

Abstract Social work purports to be a caring profession aimed at meeting the needs of its clients. But this is not the case for black people.¹ Whether they enter the social work arena as clients, employees, or students, black people experience negative treatment. They are under-represented as users of welfare services, but are over-represented in penal institutions. The subtle dynamics of personal, institutional and cultural racism permeate the routine minutiae of social work policy and practice and these, combined with the strategies white social workers utilise to avoid the tricky task of confronting racism in their work, mean that black people's needs receive short shrift. White social workers respond to black people's needs in this contradictory manner because their belief that black communities 'look after their own' enables them to exclude black people from having access to welfare services whilst their preoccupation with black people's deviancy facilitates their admitting black people to establishments where such pathological behaviour can be controlled. This article examines the interplay between racism and social work and concludes that white social work educators, white social workers and their managers must engage in change at the personal, institutional and cultural levels if racist social work policy and practice are to be eradicated and black people's needs met.

Social work purports to be the profession that cares for the welfare of its clients and aspires to meet their material and emotional needs (Compton and Galaway 1975). To what extent can black people, i.e., people of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origins, expect this axiom to apply to them and their needs when they approach the personal social services or come into contact with the criminal justice system? This paper considers this question in terms of the services white social workers working in predominantly white institutions provide for black clients, the position of black social workers as employees, and training provisions for black students. Unfortunately, the answer to this question is that white practitioners, educators and their departments have served the interests of black populations badly (ADSS/CRE 1978; Taylor 1981; Rooney 1980; Small 1984; Sewell 1985; Devine 1983; Tipler 1986; Dominelli 1988; Williams 1987). Moreover, this situation has persisted despite various attempts which have been made to counter it since the mid 1970s (Rooney 1987). Why has social work been unable to respond

Lena Dominelli is Lecturer in Applied Social Studies at the University of Warwick. She has worked in community work, social services and probation settings and has had several books published in the area of social work.



Racist Social Work Practices

Authors cite effects of racism on service delivery in Black social work history

- Denying or restricting access to services for Black clients
- Forcing Black communities to address their own needs
- Providing low quality services in Black communities
- Offering services too expensive for Blacks to afford
- Thinking Black clients have the same needs as Whites
- Ignoring that racism affects interactions with Black clients

Dominelli, 1989; Mirelowitz, 1979; Reid-Merritt, 2010; Solomon, 1976.

IMPLICATIONS OF RACISM FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

BY SEYMOUR MIRELOWITZ*

ABSTRACT

This paper examines school and practice issues in social work in relationship to the concepts of ethnicity, minority groups, racism, and institutional racism. Operational definitions to establish conceptual clarity are also developed. The statistical aspects of progression vis-à-vis cultural diversity in social work institutions, enrollment in schools of social work, and representation on the faculty of schools of social work are studied. Social policy and the implementation of change in social work practice and education are then dealt with in relation to the current reality of the profession and the society in which it functions.

*Seymour Mirelowitz is an assistant professor at the Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.

Introduction:

The purposes of this paper are:

1. To demonstrate the melting pot theory as a myth or fantasy according to the Anglo-Conformity or assimilationist concept pervasive for many years in all institutions in the American society including social work.
2. To re-examine the concept of ethnicity as cultural pluralism and to examine issues in social work relating to it.

The avowed concept of the melting pot is conceived as a vessel or crucible wherein all "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world."¹ The melting pot theory is contradicted by Anglo-Conformity concept, which postulates that immigrants



Racism in Social Work Employment

Black social work research shows how racism has historically affected the profession's ability to...

- Recruit and employ Black social workers
- Adequately training Black social workers
- Shield Black social workers from hostile work environments
- Provide Black social workers with peer supports
- Leverage their strengths as Black social workers

The employment of black social workers: from 'ethnic sensitivity' to anti-racism?

PAUL STUBBS

Abstract

This article focuses on one underdeveloped area in the study of race and social work, namely the employment of black social workers within social services departments. This includes a statement of theoretical issues, an examination of what I shall term the 'ethnic sensitivity' model, and a consideration of the ways in which black social workers may contribute towards anti-racist practices within social services departments. The article is based, in part, on original research carried out in the social services departments of two inner London boroughs.

Although the study of social work intervention in the black community has been something of a growth area, the literature has, on the whole, been guilty of two critical omissions. Firstly, it has failed to utilise the concept of racism as a central theoretical category, and secondly, it has failed to address pertinent issues in the functioning of social services departments.* This article, organised around a discussion of the implementation of policies for the employment of black social workers, seeks to address these omissions by posing a number of questions about the reproduction of racism in social services departments.

The main question concerns how far black social workers aid the smooth reproduction of racism, or whether they can be a key element in the development of anti-racist strategies and practices. The suggestion is that this is a theoretically and empirically open question. The article seeks to address these issues on the basis of research carried out between October 1983 and April 1984 in connection with a PhD research project, in the social services departments of two inner London boroughs which I shall term 'Ayeborough' and 'Beeborough'. The text includes quotes gathered from taped interviews

* See Chesham et al (eds.) 1981 and Chesham (ed) 1982 as the two most influential readers; for more critical analysis, see McCulloch and Korreck 1974, Hubbard 1980b and 1980c, and ASB/WAP 1983.

Dominelli, 1989; Stubbs, 1984; Washington, 1935.



Racism in Social Work Education

Authors show how racism within social work education has historically contributed to...

- Segregation in campus housing, eating, and study
- Social work coursework and teachings distanced from the Black community
- Social work courses on Blacks issues perceived as discriminatory against White students
- Few scholarships or funding support for Black social work students
- Difficulties in Black professors obtaining tenure in schools of social work

Longres, 1972; Schiele, 2007; Solomon, 1976.

JOHN LONGRES is assistant professor of social work and sociology at Portland State University. This paper was originally presented at the 19th Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, Seattle, Washington, January 1972.

The Impact of Racism on Social Work Education

by JOHN LONGRES

In the awareness of today's social philosophy, racism is an ugly word. We are aware that racism reflects itself in prejudice, discrimination, separation and even genocide, and we feel that these are against the values which we would like to perpetuate as a nation. We condemn racism, yet many of us do not fully understand what it is and how it operates within our society and especially within our own social work educational settings.

Populantly racism is associated with racist individuals: individuals whose attitudes and behaviors indicate hostility toward groups which differ in color from theirs.

The notion of a psychologically abnormal racist individual was given empirical support through the famous studies of *The Authoritarian Personality*.¹ Using clinical

and survey methods, this study suggested that prejudiced individuals demonstrated weak, insecure egos and were positively oriented toward authoritarianism. In spite of the fact that this study has been severely criticized, many have accepted its findings as definitive. Only recently has the adequacy of the formulations evident in *The Authoritarian Personality* been severely questioned.

No pragmatic value is found in equating racism with individual problems for then only two possibilities for dealing with the problems of our society would be open: clinical treatment and education. With regard to clinical treatment, so far as I know, social agencies are not filling up with individual racism seeking cures. With regard to education, there is little to suggest that education has made major inroads in this area. Despite popular beliefs, there is no evi-

¹ T. W. Adorno, et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950).



Racism in Social Work Research

The ways in racism historically permeated social work research is evident in...

- The belief that Blacks are nonrational and nonscientific
- The idea that Blacks cannot be detached and objective
- The view that Blacks are incapable of conducting research

Historical research reflects difficulties Black social work researchers faced...

- Limited research opportunities and funding
- Barriers to participating in research, review, editorial boards
- Few opportunity to publish their work in journals and books

Constant Struggle: E. Franklin Frazier and Black Social Work in the 1920s

They Fought
Susan Chandler

During the 1920s, E. Franklin Frazier, the eminent black sociologist, was director of the Atlantic School of Social Work. With other black social workers, Frazier made important contributions to social work and in the struggle against racism. His legacy is entering in most histories of social welfare and is relevant to the current teaching social work in the 21st century.

Fighting a rear-guard action against the Ku Klux Klan, Frazier the truth about the incident, clearly it was not solely a black intellectual to express such ideas in the South in the 1920s but did it become so in the 1950s, 1960s, or 1990s. Thus ended Frazier's work in Atlanta and five years of professional associations with social work. That fall he entered the doctoral program in sociology at the University of Chicago.

Frazier contributed significantly to social work as an administrator, researcher, and activist during his tenure at the Atlanta School of Social Work. It is best known for the distinguished contributions he made to the sociology of the family, race relations, and stratification in the black community that he received his doctorate and moved in 1934 to his lifetime position at Howard University. Although the 1920s were Frazier's most productive years and the foundation of his most mature work, it is also the time he made some original contributions to social work and set an example that has lived on against racism. In this article, these contributions will be assessed in the context of racism and the black social work, and the South in the 1920s.

This article will explore the work of Franklin Frazier, but also attempts to reconstruct an important legacy of social work that contemporary historians have largely ignored. Aside from a world-famous edited by Frazier, and social work texts generally are silent on the contributions of black professionals in the 1920s.¹ There are few references in standard histories of social welfare to the efforts of black leaders, activists, and social workers to secure minimal social services for black communities and training for black social workers.² Chapters mention in *Socialism in America* the efforts of reform-minded settlement workers such as Phyllis Kelly, Jane Addams, and Bruce Lester to promote "good neighbors" and awareness of social problems in the profession, but leaves out the story of black and white organizations and social workers who fought racism consistently.³ Similarly, Ekremovich's and Katz's significant studies of the history of social work and social policies include paragonistic chapters about the dynamics of racism in the United States during the 1920s, but nothing about the activities or contributions of black social workers.⁴

History and Context

E. Franklin Frazier's ideology and activism was a product of the emergence of the black social work movement after World War I. By 1915, nearly 400,000 black Americans had been drafted into the segregated armed forces and had learned a new life both before and after World War I. Although the 1920s were Frazier's most productive years and the foundation of his most mature work, it is also the time he made some original contributions to social work and set an example that has lived on against racism. In this article, these contributions will be assessed in the context of racism and the black social work, and the South in the 1920s.

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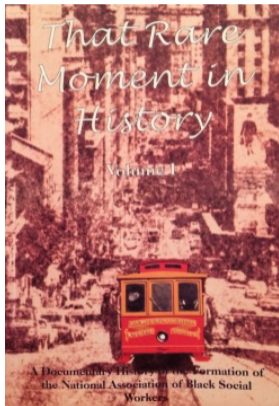
Bell, 2014; Schiele, 2007, 2013.



Addressing Racism in Social Work

Historical texts highlight attempts to address racism in social work such as...

- 1967 National Association of Black Social Workers
 - 1968 walkout at National Conference on Social Welfare
 - Ignites Black social worker's challenge to address racism in the profession
- 1970 CSWE Black Task Force
 - Tasked with developing Black curricular content and increasing Black enrollment
 - 1973 report recommends that CSWE address pervasive and persistent racism



Bell, 2014; Brown et al., 2011; Reid-Merritt, 2010; Schiele, 2007; Trolander, 1997.

Black Social Work



Black Social Work: Separate but Equal?

- Early mainstream social work movements such as Settlement Houses and Charity Organization Societies were not focused on improving the conditions of Black people
- Left out of White social work, Black social workers had to form separate and parallel systems of social services to ensure the welfare of Black people and communities
- Black-focused social welfare organizations such as Black churches, women's clubs, mutual aid societies, fraternal organizations, and other voluntary associations assisted in these efforts
- In education and research, Black social workers formed study and research groups, historically Black colleges and universities created social work programs targeting Black students, and Black scholars started Black-focused academic journals

Carlton-LaNey and Hodges, 2004; Carten, 2021; DeLoach McCutcheon, 2019; Hounmenou, 2012; Howard, 2017; Luker, 1984.

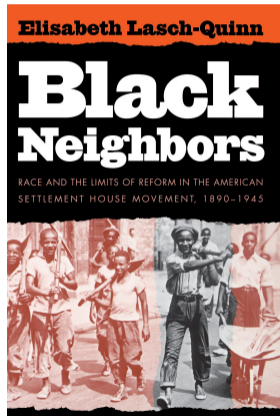


Black Settlement Houses

Black Settlement Houses were created in the absence of support for White Settlement Houses

- Frederick Douglass Center
- Trinity Mission Settlement
- Phillis Wheatley House
- South Side Settlement House
- Urban League settlement houses
- Black Caucus of Settlement Workers

Bell, 2014; Jackson, 1978; Lasch-Quinn, 1993.





Black Charity Organizations

Blacks formed their own charity organizations since most White COS discriminated against Blacks

- Black churches
- Homes for the elderly
- National Association of Colored Women's Clubs
- National League for the Protection of Colored Women
- National Urban League
- Negro Welfare Association

Jackson, 1978; Weisenfeld, 1997.

THE NEGRO AND THE CHARITY ORGANIZATION SOCIETY IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

ALVIN B. KOGUT
Adelphi University

The policies, practices, and attitudes of an important social welfare organization, the Charity Organization Society, are explored in relation to the Negro at one particular point in time, the Progressive Era. Connections between the stance of the organization, its social philosophy, and the social context are drawn. A summary of references to Negroes in the reports, publications, and journals of the societies in a number of cities indicates the range of problems brought to the COS and the nature of the responses and observations.

It is generally acknowledged that, up to the present time, minorities in general, and especially the Negro, have to a large extent been bypassed in the writing of American history. Social welfare history has, with some exceptions, tended to reflect the mainstream in this regard. A more balanced interpretation and perspective would conceivably yield a greater understanding of current problems and, at least theoretically, enhance the ability to formulate appropriate policy.

This paper is a preliminary exploration of the policies, practices, and attitudes of one important social welfare institution, the Charity Organization Society, in relation to the black minority at one particular point in time, the Progressive Era. The reports, papers, and publications of the charity organization societies in a number of cities and the major journals of philanthropy have been used as primary sources.

RACISM IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

It is one of the ironies of American history that what is ordinarily characterized as a period of democratic upsurge or reform has in fact meant something else for the Negro. As Woodward

has pointed out in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, there was a significant time lag between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the imposition of rigid segregationist laws and practices in the South. He noted that as the South "swerved toward procription and extremism, northern opinion shifted to the right, keeping pace with the South, conceding point after point, so that at no time were the sections very far apart on race policy" (29:70).

De facto segregation was not new to the North. While the institutions of slavery necessitated a certain closeness and intermingling of the races in daily affairs, urban life made no such requirement. Separatist and discriminatory practices, which ultimately became the rule, were widespread in the North even before the Civil War. By the turn of the century, segregation and discrimination tended to become more and more embedded in the military, in employment, and in many other social institutions. The migrant faced Jim Crow, northern style: the denial of suitable jobs, housing, and education; occasional riots and violence; and general exclusion from any meaningful participation in community life. According to historian John

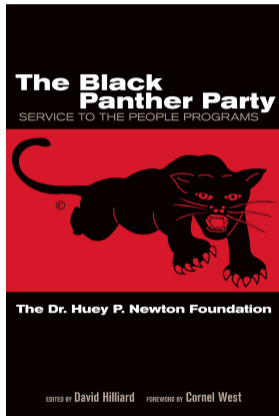


Black Welfare Organizations

Black organizations focused on the welfare and needs of the Black community

- Universal Negro Improvement Association
- African Communities League
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Black YWCA and YMCA
- The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Harvey, 1994; Hilliard and Foundation., 2008; Moore, 1994.





Black Social Work Education

HBCU Schools of Social Work (PhD)

- Fisk University
- Lincoln University in Pennsylvania
- Clark Atlanta University*
- Howard University*
- Norfolk State University*
- Morgan State University*
- Jackson State University*
- North Carolina A&T State University*

Aubrey et al., 2016; Carten, 2021.

FIND A WAY OR MAKE ONE

A Documentary History of Clark Atlanta University
Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work (1920–2020)

ALMA J. CARTEN

with a foreword by E. Aracelis Francis



Black Social Work Research



Black-Focused Journals and Press

- The Crisis (1910, W. E. B. Du Bois, NAACP)
- Journal of Negro History (1916, Carter G. Woodson)
- Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life (1923, NUL)
- The Negro Family in the United States (1939, E. Franklin Frazier)
- Phylon (1940, W. E. B. Du Bois)
- The Black Caucus Journal (1968, NABSW)

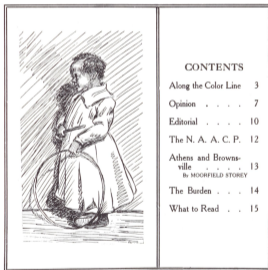
Carlton-LaNey, 1999; Lasch-Quinn, 1993; Schiele, 2013.

THE CRISIS

RECORD OF THE DARKER RACES

Volume One NOVEMBER, 1910 Number One

Edited by W. E. BURGHARDT DU BOIS, with the co-operation of Oswald Garrison Villard, J. Max Barber, Charles Edward Russell, Kelly Miller, W. S. Braithwaite and M. D. McKean.



PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
AT TWENTY VESEY STREET NEW YORK CITY

ONE DOLLAR A YEAR TEN CENTS A COPY

Black Traditions in Social Work

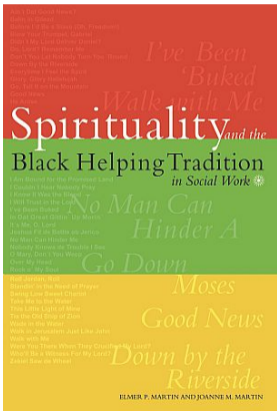


Black Spirituality

Spirituality among African-descended people have been incorporated into our profession by Black social workers as a method of...

- Providing spiritual and social connection
- Maintaining ethics, morality, and integrity
- Giving value and meaning to the Black race
- Recognizing race as a sacred concept worth fighting for
- Emphasizing collective survival, advancement, prosperity
- Facilitating human and societal transformation

Howard, 2017; E. P. Martin and Martin, 2002; Schiele, 1997.





Black Self-help & Mutual Aid

Self-help and mutual aid are values and principles that have been fundamental to Black social work efforts towards...

- Ensuring social welfare services were developed to meet the needs of the Black community
- Establishing Black social work programs in Black colleges and universities
- Advocating for policy changes to benefit Black people and communities

Carlton-LaNey, 1999; Johnson, 1991; J. M. Martin and Martin, 1985.

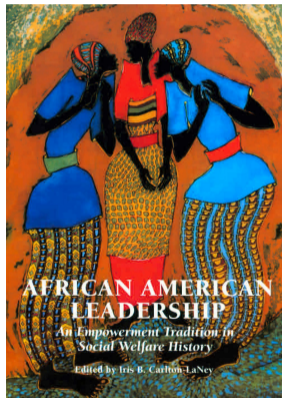




Black Empowerment

Black empowerment tradition in history of social work

- Personal: Church and spirituality
- Black: Self-worth and racial pride
- Economic: Education, training, and employment
- Political: Voting and political participation
- Neighborhood: Collective problem solving
- Community: Resistance and agency
- Client: Leveraging strengths and supports



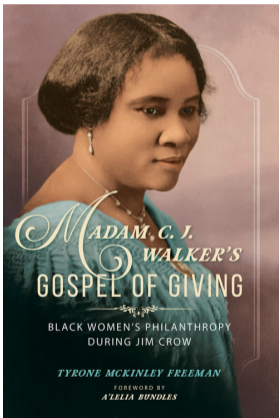
Armfield, 2014; Carlton-LaNey, 2001; DeLoach McCutcheon, 2019; Gilbert, 1974; Graham, 2004; Howard, 2017; Solomon, 1976.

Black Philanthropy



Black philanthropy in social welfare/social work is rooted in the tradition self-help and mutual aid and...

- Raised by Black women and Black churches
- Often provided by poor Blacks for poor Blacks
- Leveraged to mitigate effects of racism and oppression
- A "mechanism for survival, mutual assistance, and self-help, for social protest, for the struggle for justice, for the enhancement of the educational and economic status of blacks, and for the establishment of institutions" (Fairfax, 1995,p. 10)



Carlton-LaNey et al., 2001; Carson, 1993; Fairfax, 1995; Freeman, 2020; Leak and Reid, 2010.

Black Movements in Social Work

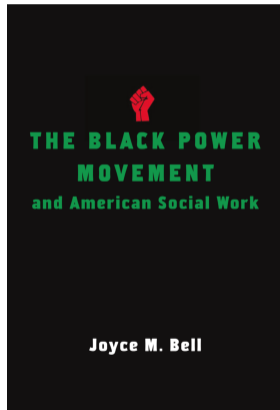


Related Black Movements

Black social movements → Black social work efforts
Nationalist and Integrationist ideologies converge

- Niagara Movement
- Black Freedom Movement
- Civil Rights Movement
- Afrocentric movement
- Black Power Movement
- Black Feminist Movement
- Black Social Work Movement
- Black Medical Movement

Armfield, 2014; Bell, 2014; Moore, 1994.





Black Preservation

Efforts by Black social workers and organizations reflect the need to preserve...

- Black identity/culture
- Family
- Children
- Communities
- Natural and human resources
- Historical sites

The Strength of Black Families: The Elusive Ties of Perspective and Praxis in Social Work Education

Tanya Smith Brice & Denise McLane-Davison

"These are times when our most prolific commodity is language, and language has a great deal to do with alienation and legitimacy."
- Chicago Catalysts: Declare War on White Racism, 1968

"We must go a step further. If it is clear that the practice of social work by blacks for blacks must operate from a new theory, then this theory of liberation must be fully and unquestionably developed to its fullest by those blacks. This new social theory must not be arrived at by outside sources who would distort the true meaning of liberation."
- LeVerne McCummings, Chairman Philadelphia Alliance of Black Social Workers, 1969

The strengths perspective, although briefly commented on by E. Franklin Frazier's (1939) early research describing the Negro family, becomes intrinsically tied to the cultural scholarship produced thereafter which pointed to the impact of structural oppression on the Black family. The political era of the Civil Rights, Women's Rights, and The Black Power Movement demanded the inclusion of rigorous research that centered racial and gender identity as significant narratives for inclusion in curriculum (Collins, 1998; Solomon 1976; Chun, 1975). The emergence of Black Studies and Women's Studies, along with student-led and national organizations incorporating the same identity politics, also became familiar parts of the intellectual land-

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Brice and McLane-Davison, 2020; Cromwell, 1977; Reid-Merritt, 2010; Schiele, 2013.

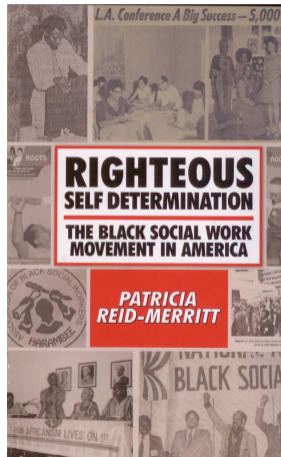


Black Self-determination

Black social workers challenged a profession threatening their right to self-determination, including...

- Child welfare agencies
- Professional social work organizations
- Social work faculty and administrators
- Eurocentric social work curriculum and training
- Eurocentric theories, models, and interventions
- Social welfare policy makers

Bell, 2014; Graham, 1999a; Leak and Reid, 2010; Reid-Merritt, 2010.



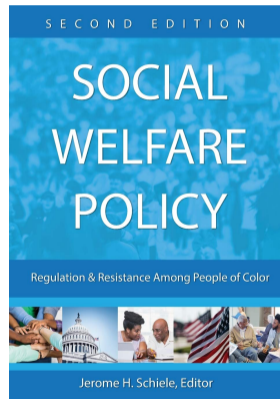
Black Resistance



Resistance has been used by Black social workers within our profession to...

- Enable Blacks to assert self-determination in the pursuit of social change
- Rupture racist and oppressive thought that maintains conventional social work knowledge
- Oppose and overturn social work theories, models, frameworks, and practices that are hostile towards Blacks
- Not passively accept social welfare policies that discriminate, marginalize, and socially isolate Blacks

Graham, 2004; Schiele, 2019.





Black Liberation

Black social workers have long advocated for our professions' commitment towards social action to include working for Black liberation

National Association of Black Social Workers (1969)

If it is clear that the practice of social work by blacks for blacks must operate from a new theory, then this *theory of liberation* must be fully and unquestionably developed to its fullest by those blacks. [...] Again, it would be chaotic for blacks to begin to talk of a new set of values and to then allow whites to define those values for us. (Reid-Merritt, 2010, p. 43)

Bell, 2014; Gilbert, 1974; Schiele, 2013.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK IN BLACK LIBERATION

THE CHARGE, in essence, is that social work is an oppressive profession.¹ Critics of social work for failure to deliver on its claim of solutions to social problems is a persistent reality. Among the critics are the poor, the black, the alienated, the oppressed and members of the profession who perceive social workers as advocates of the status quo, perpetuators of welfare colonialism and as managers of social services and programs designed to serve the pacification and control functions of the larger social welfare system. This indictment generates the questions: Does social work as a profession provide adequate concepts for understanding the problems and social realities of oppressed communities? Are social services and programs in oppressed communities designed to meet their survival needs and liberation goals? If not, in what direction ought the profession move if it is to become a liberating force in oppressed communities?

This essay, in response to these questions, offers a model for social work practice in the black community which proceeds from an expanded definition of the goals of the profession. Neo-colonialism, survival and liberation are the principal conceptual components. Neo-colonialism is used for analysis and understanding of social, economic and political realities of the oppressed community. Survival provides a way of perceiving needs and a framework for the design and provision of social services. Liberation is viewed as a phase in a larger movement for social and economic justice which requires a

diverse range of strategies and practitioner roles directed toward the ultimate goal of "being."

The "black community" refers to all black Americans. Notions of stratification are inconsistent with the basic communal value implicit in the thrust of this paper. Further, the political and economic structures of America are such that as a group black Americans are relatively powerless.²

The ideas expressed here are the result of a social process that probably began with the 1960's. That decade amplified the magnitude of social, political and economic disparity and injustice in America, giving rise simultaneously to a mass movement that articulated new ideologies and strategies as various change-oriented groups attempted to find viable solutions. In addition, recent practical experience in the black community and continuous efforts to share with social work students the knowledge, values and skills required for effective action in the black community, have also been factors.

The notions advanced here are based on several basic assumptions.

1—Neo-colonialism is an appropriate conceptual framework for analyzing the political, economic and social situation of oppressed people in general and the black community in America in particular.

2—The profession of social work is an integral part of the social welfare system in



Black Abolition

Early Black social workers and the like worked towards the abolition of...

- Slavery (in all its forms)
- Legal racism
- Racial oppression
- Racial segregation

"Gentle Student Bend Thine Ear To My Speech"
An Essay About Sojourner
Truth, Abolitionist and Feminist

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Sojourner Truth provides a powerful model of advocacy for the social work profession. This paper offers an analysis of this important historical figure that centers around the implications of being a doubly oppressed minority. An analysis of the nineteenth century chattel slavery system sets the stage for understanding the social environment. A brief biography of her life and evolution from enslaved chattel to feminist activist will highlight her social, spiritual, and personal development. Her philosophy, which is compatible with the modern feminist movement, is outlined by an analysis of her speeches.

Sojourner Truth is listed in most every reference book highlighting notable African-Americans. Historians agree that she played an important role in nineteenth century American history; however, the majority of data available do not analyze the implications and motivations of her work. This lack of scholarly research combined with the illiteracy of the subject presents a special challenge in writing this intellectual biography. Due to the virtual absence of personal papers, the writer must depend upon the accuracy of dictated narratives to which writers have added their own interpretations. The most valuable insight into this important historical figure's life comes from transcripts of her speeches. "Gentle student bend thine ear to my speech", the title of this essay, are Sojourner Truth's words also chosen to title the 1853 version of her narrative.

Sojourner Truth demands the attention of social work researchers and historians because of her monumental accomplishments and her status as an enslaved African-American woman. Social work exists to serve oppressed groups and So-

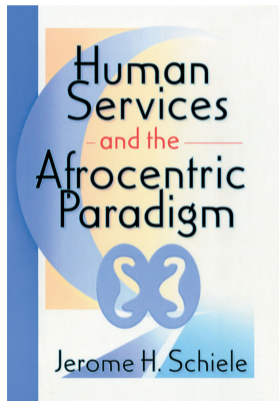
Bent-Goodley, Snell, et al., 2017; Johnson, 1991; Somerville, 1994; Yearwood, 1980.

Afrocentricity



Studies found conflicts between Afrocentricity and Eurocentrically oriented social work theories, paradigms, and models that...

- Drive practice, teaching, and research on Black people
- Are not reflective of the realities of Black Americans
- Ignore sociocultural uniqueness of people of African ancestry
- Are adapted to address Black issues in Black neighborhoods
- Fail to address distinctive liberation needs of Black people
- Perpetuate racism in human services and related fields
- Enforce adoption of Eurocentric cultural values and practices



Bent-Goodley, Fairfax, et al., 2017; Graham, 1999a, 1999b; Schiele, 1996, 1997, 2013.

Black Social Work Leaders



Some Researchers of Black Social Welfare/Work

- Iris Carlton-LaNey
- Jerome H. Schiele
- Tricia B. Bent-Goodley
- Denise McLane-Davison
- Wilma Peebles-Wilkins
- Robenia B. Gary
- Lawrence E. Gary
- Mekada Graham
- Garland L. Jagers
- Audrey E. Johnson
- Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn
- Joyce M. Bell
- Elmer P. Martin
- Joanne M. Martin



Some of the Many Black Social Work Leaders

- Eugene Kinckle Jones
- George Edmund Haynes
- E. Franklin Frazier
- Carter G. Woodson
- Lucy Diggs Slowe
- Inabel Burns Lindsay
- Sarah Collins Fernandis
- Forrester Blanchard Washington
- Birdye Henrietta Haynes
- Whitney M. Young
- Willie Gertrude Brown
- Phillis Wheatley
- William Boyd Allison Davis
- William Still
- Ada S. McKinley
- Maggie Lena Walker

For historical contributions of Black Social workers, see Presentation titled *Dr. Iris Carlton-LaNey Presents on the Contributions of Black Icons* (CSWE – February 19, 2021) on [YouTube](#)

Our Future



How Will We Change History?

What will you do to ensure a more complete social work history? Here are some suggestions...

1. Incorporate Black social welfare and social work history into social work curriculum and doctoral comprehensive exams
2. Interview and document the history of contemporary Black social work scholars, community members, and organizations so they are not lost to omissions in history
3. Ensure books on Black social work history are in social work libraries
4. Purchase access to historical and contemporary journals targeting issues of Black people
5. Cultivate archives focused on local Black social work contributions
6. Reclaim and redefine Black history that is actually Black social work history and understand it as simply social work history
7. Collaborate with Indigenous and communities of color to incorporate their social work history and replicate the efforts proposed for Black social work history



How Will I Change History?

- Incorporate Black social work history into my curriculum
- Leverage this historical research to dismantle racism in our profession
- Begin conducting research on contemporary Black social workers
- CSWE Educator|Resource (July 2021 release, with Drs. Jerome H. Schiele and David J. Pate Jr.)
- Social Welfare History Group (CSWE Track) expanded bibliography



How Are Others Changing History?

Here are some amazing presentations on Black social workers

- Drs. Iris Carlton-LaNey & Tanya Smith Brice
 - Dr. Iris Carlton-LaNey Presents on the **Contributions of Black Icons** (with Tanya Smith Brice, CSWE). [Available on YouTube](#)
- Drs. Jerome H. Schiele, Joshua Kirven, Sean Joe, & Martell L. Teasley
 - **Intergenerational Contributions of Black Male Social Work Educators to Combating Racism** (in Social Work, White Supremacy, and Racial Justice, University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work). [Available on YouTube](#)
- Dr. Denise McLane-Davison & Mr. Garland Jagers
 - **Black Power, Black Liberation & Social Work: Back to the Beginning of the National Association of Black Social Workers** (Shimon Cohen's Doin' The Work Podcast). [Podcast available on many platforms](#)



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 - Drs. Stephen Monroe Tomczak, Jessica Toft, Mimi Abramovitz, & Alice Gates
 - [🐦@SWHG1956](https://www.southernct.edu/swhg), <https://www.southernct.edu/swhg>
- CSWE Minority Fellowship Program
 - Dr. Duy Nguyen, MFP team, fellows, & alumni

Thank You!

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