

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH: The Legacy of Dr Chancellor Williams in: The Destruction of Black Civilization - PART TWO

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**By Deborah Gabriel**

Photo courtesy Oggi Ogburn



According to Williams "The whites are the implacable foe, the traditional and everlasting enemy of the Blacks", and only when Black people realise this fact can the re-education of the Black race and a solution to the crises begin. He defends this pronouncement by saying that it is "the calm and unmistakable verdict of several thousand years of documented history."

However, Williams does not advocate "hatred or screaming" seeing such acts as signs of weakness that prevent clear thinking. He derides Blacks "who are still pleading with the whites for brotherhood through integration" stating that they "are so deaf and blind that they are unable to get the white enemy's reply to these frantic pleas for acceptance through integration."

Speaking of the America he grew up in, Williams refers to the period following the end of racial segregation where whites fled to the suburbs leaving the Blacks in ghettos, totally rejecting the idea of living peacefully with their Black neighbours. "The Black youth of America got the message", writes Williams. But middle class Blacks on the other hand, do not feel competent enough to develop high standards of living within all-black communities and crave acceptance from white society.

Of them, Williams scathingly writes: "These Negroes have neither the ethnic pride nor the self-respect that is so characteristic of the American Indians, Japanese and Chinese." According to Williams there is only peace and harmony between Blacks and whites "when the Blacks humbly stay in their place – their subordinate place." Turning his attention to Africa, Williams says that even here "white is still the standard of excellence of what is right and best."

A number of African presidents, for example dare not make a move without first consulting white advisors, most of whom know far less about the issue at hand than the president and his ministers, who, "all feel the need for the white seal of approval." The Black elite "think of independence as a mere transfer of power from a white ruling class to a black ruling class, leaving the masses no better off than they had been under colonialism."

**The solutions to the issues facing the Black race**



Oggi Ogburn

Williams says that a new focus on working for African unity must be the starting point, because: "Black Africa can never deal effectively with white ruled areas until it deals with itself first." To this end, Africa needs "dedicated leaders, not just office-holding bureaucrats. These will be people on a mission to improve the lives of people, rather than enriching themselves."

A pervading problem with Black leaders, says Williams is that many of them "do not know what their own heritage is." Some Blacks are only too happy to draw on and identify with white heritage, while others who are ignorant of their true history simply do not know which way to lead:

"They too feel compelled to adopt and follow [white] ideologies because they do not feel free, equal and competent enough to develop an ideology of their own, an African-centred ideology." One of the consequences of colonialism and slavery is that "the ideologies and value systems of the oppressors quite unconsciously become those of the oppressed, even when the result is demonstratively against themselves."

Furthermore, as Blacks have been dependent on whites for so many generations they have become "mentally lazy." "When African people achieve enough unity to develop the ideological guidelines for their own advancement they will draw what is best for them from any or all existing systems as a matter of course."

Finally, writes Williams, racism will never go away and therefore the "pretence of love and brotherhood" should be abandoned. People of the African race should accept the fact that they are rejected by whites. "There should emerge a new relationship that commands respect, not love, one that will bring about co-operation and opportunities that result in real equality and equal justice."

### **The character of Dr Williams and they key message of his book**

In 1975 at the age of 33, Oggi Ogburn, became a personal assistant to Dr Chancellor Williams, who at 74 years old was almost blind and needed help with his correspondence, someone to shop for his groceries and to take him to the doctor once a month. Having read 'The Destruction of Black Civilization' which had a profound effect on his outlook to life, Oggi Ogburn told Black Britain that when he learnt he would be working with Dr Williams:

"It became one of the greatest days of my existence." His book, said Ogburn "gave me a new realization of who I was." Ogburn told Black Britain that as he began to spend more time with Dr Williams "we became friends" and "he became my mentor for life." Ogburn was propelled into Dr William's world as due to the popularity of the book, the historian and author was asked to lecture around the country at many colleges and universities including Columbus, Ohio, Boston, Amherst Mass, Chicago, Knoxville Tennessee and schools in California.

Ogburn met with colleagues of Dr Williams "who were giants in documenting Black history", including John Henrik Clarke, John Jackson, Queen Mother Moore who worked with Marcus Garvey, Yosef Ben-Jochannan and Minister Farrakhan. Ogburn said of

Chancellor Williams: "The mighty doctor also visited prisons, drug rehab programs and many African oriented elementary schools. He loved black people and he did what he could to educate, uplift and inspire them for the improvement of life." Dr Williams was a strong Pan-African leader believing that Black people need to take responsibility for their own affairs. Ogburn told Black Britain of an occasion he was asked to write a letter to a man who asked why Dr Williams did not attend the 6th Pan African Congress. The answer given was:

"Since its inception the Pan African Congress was to unite people of African heritage all around the world, but this congress invited Arabs." Ogburn told Black Britain: "To Chancellor, the Arabs were white." Ogburn told Black Britain that Dr Williams had great respect for women stating that "the woman must be a companion with common areas of interest." Men who want women just for sex "want a bitch and women should not be treated like animals."

Dr Williams died on 7 December 1992 at the age of 94. Whilst sad at his passing Ogburn told Black Britain it was a "blessing to have a relationship with the mighty doctor."

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