

ave either dropped out of the political process or were never given much of a chance to be involved in it. If these millions were to rise from their bitter despair and lethargy and use something more than their constitutional right to register and vote they could begin a revolution sweeping in its effects and changes as the original revolt against English rule, which was corrupt and shortsighted as the current American government. This revolution is underwritten in the fundamentals of the nation itself, and is more binding than the ancient right to remove emperors in old China or revolt against kings in medieval Europe. This revolution is within the law, it is supported by the law, in essence at least if seldom in practice; and the law not only provides its mechanics, the law in sense depends on popular uprisings to maintain its legitimacy.

Jesse Jackson demonstrated in 1988 that minorities and the poor have little chance in the existing state of the nation, yet the potential for real power lies within these disillusioned masses.

There are approximately ten million black voters, most of them centered in the Democratic Party which holds them at arm's length, and millions more who are eligible to vote but are not registered. Just the ten million registered blacks alone can make a significant difference in the chances of candidates of the two parties, not to mention the powerful leverage of forming a strong independent black party such as one of that name that briefly emerged in 1980, a year or third parties. The black community is by no means monolithic in its thoughts and opinions but the racism focused against blacks in this country makes for a strong unity. The manipulation of racism in political campaigns by white candidates, who trade on a backlash against civil rights gains for blacks, might themselves have set in motion a reverse whitelash.

White voters switched from the Democratic Party to the Republicans because they perceived it as a party of minorities, mainly blacks, while Democratic candidates saw such a perspective to be a liability. The national tide and strength of the conservative movement is the result of the gains of the civil rights movement, which set off a full scale revolt against minority rights and precipitated the political move to the right. White males also fled the Democratic Party because of the growing influence of the feminist movement within the party. And though the Democrats have been staunchly labor oriented, much of its support from the big unions withered as a result of increasing involvement in the party by other minorities besides blacks and women, such as Hispanics and the flood of newer arrivals from Asia and other parts of what used to be called the third world (with the collapse of Soviet communism the world is now divided into rich and poor nations, and as in the United States, into the rich and poor within nations).

By 1988 it was no longer politically correct to claim oneself as a liberal, and 1992 continues the trend. The Party of Special Interests — blacks, women, what remains of labor that remains — having alienated white males who formed the core support of Ronald Reagan and his successors, enters the 1992 Presidential campaign wearing a party mask of neo-Republicanism.

The Democratic Party leadership has chased its fleeing whites into the conservative vice of the Republicans, and has left behind the vast majority of its membership. As a result the two parties form a single interest group with very little difference between them. The dynamic of pressures against the Democrats and Republicans are pushing them into a carbon copy sameness and they respond to an increasingly narrow constituency. Perhaps the question is not about a third party but creating a truly second party.

Molly Innes says most people perceive that the spectrum of American politics runs right to left, but that it really runs top to bottom; not ideology but economics; not issues about gays, feminists, etc., but how the very few control the very many.

The manner in which great powers decline is wild extravagance at the top and misery at the bottom. Two Americas have developed, one rich and privileged, the other exploited and heavily taxed, with separate sets of laws governing each. As the importance of wealth, no matter how acquired, assumes greater influence, the social inequities between the wealthy and the less wealthy are accentuated. At the present time the wealthy ten percent of the population owns sixty-five percent of the nation's net worth while the bottom half has only four percent. In the meantime legalized deceptions allow wealthy individuals and the richest corporations to escape with little or no tax payments while the shrinking middle class and the poor pay punitive taxes to make up the deficit; and their taxes pay the huge bailouts of expensive fraud and mismanagement by these same high-roller entrepreneurs and corporations. The biggest crimes in a nation haunted and infuriated with crime are not committed by poor blacks as politicians claim to frighten the electorate but by white businessmen who steal billions of dollars of public investments.

The plutocrats of both political parties claim that the economy defines the nation more than its ideology: money is the nation's ideology. What they mean by their interpretation of the "economy" is their own personal control of the

nation's wealth. Narrow monetary policies that singularly benefit the upper layers of society draw money from less well off levels which keeps them less well off and always under pressure to pay what is demanded. Releasing public money (most of it pried from middle class and blue-collar workers) to businessmen and the wealthy elite is considered good, even necessary for the economy. Feeding the poor or providing them adequate shelter and medical care, or even educating them, is regarded as uneconomical and a drain on the nation's treasury.

The idea of the United States is that common people can adequately forge their own destinies privately and collectively, but only if allowed freedom from the tyranny of Kings and other Bastards who would subvert them. Unfortunately, the common people produce their own Bastards who turn against their friends and neighbors for their own avaricious desires of acquisition and power, and ape in style and authority the aristocracies so painfully removed.

In theory everybody has an equal chance to make a buck and live the American dream in pursuit of happiness, but of course some are more equal than others in intelligence or capacity or just plain luck (or cupidity). Some of these fortunates share their good fortune but most hog what they've taken and increase it at the expense and labor of others whom they attempt to prevent attaining any chance of equality of sharing in the worth of their production, and such notions of equity are repelled as socialism or communism. Yet the real purpose of the American experiment is that human beings should be able to coexist as equals, not necessarily in wealth or advantage but in basic rights and liberties, and equally share in power, and that none should be denied these whatever their wealth or advantage.

The imbalance that has rotted the core of our democracy has produced mendacious mediocrity at the upper levels of governance. The quality of seekers of the Presidency has seldom been remarkable, and as the power of the Presidency increases the quality has proportionately declined. Once again in 1992 we will be offered a choice of two white males in a nation in which women are the majority and the great variety of races outnumber caucasians. Women have made it into the middle level of politics, as have a few blacks, Hispanics and Asian-Americans: but for the present and probably beyond the end of the century the top national positions are closed to all but a small club of white males, a minority of upper class men who strain to hold onto power similar to the white minority in South Africa, clinging desperately, defiantly and ruthlessly to their peculiar form of country club apartheid.

It is time to put into force what Jesse Jackson intuitively understood four years ago to be the only practical method short of civil war to wrest power from the adherents of plutocracy and preserve our failing democracy. We must open up the system to the other three-quarters of America by bringing them back into it by registering them to vote and organizing them into as many parties as can contain them.

Demolishing the Democratic Party will only be accomplished by the majority it has abandoned but still pretends to represent and appeals to for reelection. The creation of a new party or a spawn of parties might have disruptive effects, a worst case scenario being a civil war such as occurred when the Republicans replaced the Whigs and as might occur in the new Republics whose multiple births ripped apart the Soviet womb and might also subdivide the Republics themselves or cause war between them. The risks here at home are tremendous, yet the American political apparatus needs massive and real change which is not being provided by an antiquated two party system that only represents a privileged minority. A vast and discontented mass of citizens have been cheated of their heritage and wishes it returned. This will be done only when power is returned to the people, and only the people will return it.



## THE GREAT WHITE HOPE

In April 1989, The Psychiatric Times described neo-fascist outbreaks on the West Coast. Similar attitudes may now be independently surfacing among some white voters in the South. In November's gubernatorial election in Louisiana, remittent Nazi David Duke obtained 700,000 votes, 55% of white ballots. His defeat was assured only because blacks compose nearly one-third of Louisiana's electorate. Had he run in the Old South he would now be governor-elect.

The candidate's program was not openly fascist, and out-of-state fascists reportedly did not flock to Louisiana to advance it. (The racist-tinged campaign platform denounced affirmative action, welfare, environmental pollution and political corruption.) But Duke's history, campaign team and private behavior surrounded him with a fascist patina that could be conveniently denied or touted through the grapevine, whichever was most expedient.

Former Tennessee representative Bob Hawks, Duke's conservative state campaign coordinator, quit his post after six weeks, denounced the candidate, and revealed some of Duke's private behavior after Duke lied about belonging to a church. "Having been an active Christian for most of my life," he told a Memphis newspaper, "I could not see Christ in Duke's daily life. When Duke had to lie about his church affiliation, he certainly would lie about anything else. . . . Duke can remove his sheet and hood and have all this plastic surgery, but this still leaves him as a neo-Nazi, Ku Klux Klanner, and non-Christian."

Normally, liberal pundits were stunned by Duke's showing. "There is something incredible about Americans voting in large numbers for an admirer of Adolf Hitler," wrote Anthony Lewis of the New York Times. "Less than 50 years ago Americans died fighting the unmitigated evil of Nazism. To know that many today would overlook a politician's attachment to that evil. . . is to know something is deeply wrong in this country."

Duke began taking his message to the national Republican electorate in December by challenging President George Bush in selected primaries. Meanwhile sociologists scrambled to explain his popularity in Louisiana. New York's Voter Research & Surveys did an exit poll of Louisiana voters, which had a sampling error of up to 4%. Duke's supporters proved to be largely white working and low- to mid-middle class Republicans. Within these groups, he was generally more popular with voters over 45 and under 30 — perhaps because his campaign evoked both nostalgia and a desire for radical change.

Based on these results, it appears that Duke carried the white vote by combining racism with fundamentalism, and appealing to the economic fears of the working and middle class, particularly to youth, seniors, and those with no college education.

But that does not square with what white voters told pollsters. Among the 18% who cited racial attitude as the key issue, nearly 70% were supporters of rival Edwin Edwards. The most important issue Duke supporters named was Louisiana's political corruption.

There is no way of verifying whether Duke supporters were telling the truth, consciously or subconsciously. Without more extensive data, analysts cannot conclude whether Duke supporters were circumstantially racist and/or fascist in order to protest corruption, were spurious muckrakers attempting to seize a long-cherished opportunity to advance racism and/or fascism, or were using "corruption" as merely a code word for economic anxiety.

A second election peculiarity was Duke's black support, tiny though it was. Although only 4% of all African-American voters supported Duke, 9% of the state's Afro-American Catholics did, a group that is largely lower middle class. (Some middle class blacks consider the welfare system racially insulting.)

A third election oddity was the high turnout. Louisiana's 78% voter turnout for a state election represents a stark departure from 1988 when only 50% of voters turned out for the national Presidential election. It suggests that, for the moment, satisfactory participation in the U.S. voting process is only possible when radical change is at issue.

—MICHAEL HOROWITZ

Michael Horowitz is co-director and editor of Times Eagle Books. He is a social psychologist and medical writer as well as a novelist and political commentator. His article has been excerpted from The Psychiatric Times.