

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## Vantage point

CIVIL RIGHTS AGENDA FOR THE 1990s  
FOCUS OF NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM



## GUESS WHO'S NOT COMING TO DINNER

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

It will come as no surprise to those of us who are from the African American Community that all the experts are in agreement that a "great gulf" separates African Americans from white Americans. Over the past few weeks no less than four major studies have shown that African Americans "lag significantly behind whites," that racial segregation in America is far deeper than previously thought by social scientists, that the widening health gap between African Americans and whites is due in part to racism and low self-esteem among African Americans, and that gaps between African Americans and whites in employment, income, and education are so broad that parity between the two races is unlikely to occur in this century.

In the recently released report of the National Research Council, it was found that despite social and economic gains made by African Americans over the past 50 years that, "If all racial discrimination were abolished today, the life prospects facing many poor blacks would still constitute major challenges for public policy." It also found that many of the myths about why African Americans have not progressed are indeed false including the belief that female-headed households, high birth rates to unmarried women, low labor force participation by males or poor academic performance are due solely to government support programs or the existence of a "culture of poverty" among African American poor.

Another study of racial segregation in 10 of the nation's largest cities found that segregation is much more prevalent than social scientists had previously thought. This study, done by Professor Douglas S. Massey and Dr. Nancy A. Denton at the University of Chicago, concluded that African Americans and whites in racially segregated cities rarely interact outside the workplace and that African Americans isolated in central cities have even less contact with whites. The effect of such deep-seeded segregation is higher poverty, crime and unemployment, according to Dr. Massey. In a recent New York Times article, Dr. Massey pointed out the significance of this study, saying, "Where you live determines the chances you get in this world. It determines the school your children go to, the crime you're exposed to, the peer influences on your children. If you're isolated from the mainstream, it's not a fair world, it's not a fair contest. Segregation is structural underpinning of the underclass."

At the recent meeting of the National Medical Association, the professional organization of African American doctors nationwide, a symposium on race, racism and health was held. It found that the widening health gap between African Americans and whites is due in part to racism and the reaction of African Americans to it as well as the low self-esteem on the part of many members of the African American community. According to the outgoing president of the National Medical Association, Dr. Frank E. Stagers, cancer, diabetes, liver disease, substance abuse, infant mortality and now AIDS are the leading causes of death among African Americans that can be "directly attributed to racial and economic factors."

Likewise, the National Urban League has found that because of the wide gaps between African Americans and whites in employment, income and education, parity is unlikely "until after the year 2000."

What all of these studies should say to African Americans and white Americans alike is that solving this country's problems of racism must remain on this nation's front burner. What these studies should say to the Bush administration is that we must focus our nation's attention on making this a country of equal opportunity for all Americans. We can not afford to turn back now.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Denial of Straight-Talk Program With Pastor Mary H. Smith:

We are writing this letter to inform our Community of the actions taken by the Department of Corrections Officials at the Oregon State Penitentiary on August 9, 1989, and after receiving additional information on August 16, 1989, the prison Officials denied Pastor Mary H. Smith from bringing in At Risk Youth to the Straight-Talk Program.

Uhuru Sa-Sa, began a program entitled Straight-Talk on May 5, 1989, which was designed to address the problems facing At-Risk Youth. Self-Enhancement was the outside group to bring in a group of Kids. After an overwhelming amount of opposition from the prison administrators, such as the Activities Manager stating that working with the youth was the TURE of the Lifer's Club? We strongly objected and stated that was the type of mentality that we wanted to get our youth out of, and here you prison officials are trying to enforce it. Next we had to show the prison officials that when we started this organization some 21 years ago, we had a Cry Of Love program dealing with under privileged youth. Therefore, we are the ones in this prison who started working with kids before any other prison in the Country as well as being the first with this institution. Whereas we were allowed to have our second edition of straight-Talk, again Self-Enhancement, was allowed to bring in a group of good kids, the reason was the Administration didn't want any At-Risk Youth inside the prison walls. It is real clear that these people are looking at our program as a solution they don't want right now! Understanding that they are building a brand new prison that will hold 3,000 people. It can't be for us because we are already here. Therefore, it must be for the ones we are trying to deter and save with our Straight-Talk program.

Well, due to scheduling, Self-Enhancement cannot bring any youth down until some-time in October, 1989. However, one of our Community Preachers, Pastor Mary H. Smith, Harvest Time Ministries T.V. Services, seen the good the program can

## BAN APARTHEID!

do and offered to bring in At-Risk Youth to the Straight-Talk Program and was denied. Now the pastor, has a prison ministries that comes in every other month at OSP and she also has a counseling program at O.W.C.C. She has a masters, B.S. several AA degrees, a nurses position and on and on. But these people denied her twice.

It is our position with the program to try and help save our youth and put something back into the Community. It seems to be our Community's position to try and save our youth and Community. However, it appears very clear that the powers to be are only interested in capitalizing on the profits of our youths inevitable incarceration at the pace they are going. Are the good people at the Power-House Temple Church the only people in the Community who want to help save the youth.

If you want to help and get involved write to Fred B. Pearce, Director of Corrections 2575 Center Street N.E., Salem, Oregon 97310, or Call Pastor Mary H. Smith, and ask what you can do personally to help save the youth.

John Dudley Leftridge III

## PERSPECTIVES

By McKinley Burt

One of our readers has asked that I cite the tremendous contribution of all those grass-roots Poverty Program workers who labored so tirelessly to make many operations work-even those which shouldn't have (including thousands of hours of unpaid nights and weekends). Consider it done, and beyond that, let me commend those who developed and honed skills which led them into better-than-average jobs in the conventional work-force.

Having said that, let us look at some earlier Portland Economic Development pioneered by grass-roots Blacks in the Northeast community-Business institutions of the kind that

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

As many of you know, my independent Presidential campaign last year--when I became the first Black woman ever to receive federal primary matching funds and then the first woman and the first African American ever to have on the ballot in all 50 states--was a crusade for fair elections. That struggle did not end on election day, because the fight to open up the electoral process-to make it more inclusive, more democratic and more fair--is far from over. Recently we won a major victory in that fight, one which will have important ramifications for the 1992 Presidential election.

Early in August a U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that educational and other organizations which enjoy tax exempt status on the basis of being non-partisan can be challenged in court for acting in a partisan manner and may have their tax exempt status revoked. Judge Lawrence W. Pierce of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Second Circuit, writing the majority opinion of a three judge panel, ruled in Lenora B. Fulani vs the League of Women Voters that an injured candidate or party may mount such a legal challenge without first having to apply to the Internal Revenue Service. Until now, the IRS has been the sole arbiter in such conflicts. The ruling will affect all not for profit organizations, such as the League, planning to hold Presidential debates in 1992. In other words, they will face big financial trouble if they continue to act as private debating societies for the Democrats and Republicans.

Judge Pierce's ruling was made in a suit I brought against the League of Women Voters, which had excluded me from its Presidential primary debates last year on the grounds that I was neither a Democrat nor a Republican; the League argued that since I was an independent I had not conducted a primary campaign. However, the Federal Elections Commission, in awarding me federal primary matching funds, had determined that as an independent candidate I went through the equivalent of a primary campaign to establish the viability and credibility of my candidacy--collecting over 1.5 million signatures just to get on the ballot in every state (by contrast, Democrats and Republicans only need to collect 50,000 signatures).

Although the court said that the League could hold separate debates for the Democrats and for the Republicans during the primary season, it also ruled that neither the government nor tax exempt organizations can favor some parties over others. And it indicated that primary season voter education programs have to include significant independent campaigns.

We will now be able to use Judge Pierce's ruling as a wedge to force open the national political dialogue to independent and third party candidates, who provide an alternative to the bi-partisan political monopoly that refuses to address the life and death issues that are of profound concern to the people of this country--issues such as the right of every American to a decent home, health care, and a quality education; issues such as the U.S. government's subsidizing of repression against poor people of color from Haiti to Zaire; issues such as the right of every woman to choose a safe abortion.

In 1988 two major "minor" parties emerged on the American political scene. One was the right-of-center Libertarian Party. The other was the independent, Black-led and multi-racial, "people instead of profits" New Alliance Party which I am proud to chair--America's fourth largest party. The court's ruling in my suit against the League of Women Voters was a response to that momentous political development. For many years the major parties and the entire array of social institutions that support them--state legislatures and Congress; the news media; public relations firms; polling companies; and federal agencies such as the IRS--have coasted along on the smug assumption that they could get away forever with pretending to the American voter that bi-partisanship is the same as non-partisanship--that the political monopoly of the two major parties is what democracy is all about and that everyone who wasn't a Republican or a Democrat was "fringe," a kook, or a crank.

But my independent Presidential campaign was significant enough to force this issue into a court of law. And the Constitution (which doesn't even mention political parties, let alone equate them with the democratic process) has been upheld.

But a new political day is dawning. Black-led, multi-racial independent politics is here to stay.

should be (could be) operating today! I will preface my description with the comment that America's economy functions around the concept of Common Interest Groups, whether credit unions, trade associations, labor unions, manufacturing groups, professional associations, farmers, Greek-Letter societies, or whatever.

The case I bring before you is that in the late 1930's, several Black "Common Interest Groups" launched successful economic development programs in the community. Among these were the Pullman Porters, the Dining Car Waiters, the Red Caps, and other Railroad Employees. Similarly involved were the Fraternal Organizations and Ladies Auxiliaries. Two of the principal commercial sites developed were the Acme Business Club and The Fraternal Hall: They were located on North Williams Avenue, just south of Broadway, and immediately across the street from today's Coliseum Complex.

It was here in the heart of yesterday's Black community that these corporations owned (or leased out to residents) restaurants, professional offices (Medical/Dental), ballrooms, night clubs, barber/beauty shops, service companies and other enterprises. Additionally, these groups bought and developed considerable real estate to house the community, apartment houses, duplexes, and single-family dwellings. All of this was financed by monthly assessments of the members, i.e. from their salaries. Remember my description of Reverend Sullivan's Zion Operations.

It is to be noted that all of this was done without a single federal dollar (or control). These Black grass-roots entrepreneurs developed a multi-million dollar base in the heart of the city's second most valuable sector. It is conceded that the very same area is worth over a quarter-billion dollars today. When I returned from a twelve-year sojourn in California during the 1950's and 1960's, I found that all of the Black developments were gone. Now, there was the Coliseum com-

plex, the 1-5 and Banfield Interchanges and myriad white-owned commercial enterprises.

The answer, of course, was not so much Urban Renewal, but Urban Removal (of Blacks). It was (is) a nationwide phenomena, a device to separate minorities from ownership of prime real estate in the central cities, using such techniques as eminent domain, and massive federal grants. The Blacks are paid off in residential dollars for property worth a hundred times that in commercial value (The Emanuel Hospital complex is an example). One may ask, in such instances, where are our community leaders and attorneys or, indeed, where are the children for whom we broke our backs to send to college of get smart? Some actually are working as brokers to expedite the process of species extinction (dinosaurs).

If we subscribe to the premise that experience increases wisdom, then certainly we should take a long look at the "Common Interest Groups" we have in the Portland Black community today: Post office workers, longshoremen, ship repair, bank employees, phone company staff, Black elected officials, fraternal organization members, state clubs, fraternity and sorority members, women's clubs, you name them. Why should we be less financially astute decades later than were our grandfathers and grandmothers? Why can't these groups--each collectively in some pattern-finance and operate minority businesses in our community?

Today, there is available a larger and more sophisticated data base of information, greatly expanded business libraries and trade association materials, special start-up and turn-key techniques developed by manufacturers and distributors, and much more that was not available to the pioneers. When I visit the business section of the public library, I find it fixed with Asians! Our future is scary--Can we be less prepared than others?

## HOWARD PLANS MAJOR CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL ISSUES

A major conference entitled "One-Third of a Nation: African American Perspectives" will bring together hundreds of scholars and policymakers on the Howard University campus November 8-12, 1989, to discuss various solutions to a range of problems affecting the nation and minority populations in the United States.

"Our approach will be to analyze conditions in order to make recommendations for improvements that can be carried into the 21st century," said Howard professors Dr. Lorenzo Morris and Dr. Ura Jean Oyemade, who are co-chairs of the university's Task Force on One-Third of a Nation, a group of more than 100 faculty members formed to oversee development of this meeting.

The conference is an outgrowth of various recent studies detailing the declining status of U.S. minorities. In particular, the Task Force has focused on a special Congressional Report, "The Future of African-Americans to the Year 2000," and the report "One-Third of a Nation" done by the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life.

Thirteen specific areas of study will be covered at the conference, which will consist of 52 sessions in the form of roundtable and panel discussions as well as several keynote addresses by national leaders.

The main areas to be addressed are: Voting and Political Participation, Substance Abuse, Immigrants and Immigration, Employment and Labor, Education, The Role of Religious Institutions, Economic Development, Science and Technology, Health, Black Family Life, Housing, Media, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

For more information, contact the conference headquarters at (202) 686-2265.

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