



EDITORIAL / OPINION



Perspectives



by Professor McKinley Burt

The readers of this column are quite aware by now how events at home or abroad impact upon the economic and social condition of urban blacks--local, regional, national, and, how, international. If submarine warfare World War I had not cut off European immigration in 1914, Blacks would have soon been displaced to reservations right along with the Indians (has our vast drug-besieged and incarcerated underclass fared any better?). It has made equally obvious that it is education and workplace that comprise the urban stage for scenarios that can match any Shakespearean tragedy. But it is all the fault of that middle class which Black essayist Shelby Steele says should get rid of its victim-focused Black identity... our real problem is lack of ability to take responsibility and seize opportunities? And, is that what Darin Scott meant when he told a standing-room only audience at the University of Southern California last month, "We (Blacks) are the first group in modern history to see those who follow behind us have fewer opportunities and rockier road to travel than we did"? I wonder about the validity of these statements when I look back through my files which are 35 years compendium of activism and observation. Beginning with my ten-year sojourn in Los Angeles (1954-1964), I find that, supported by an equally comited peer group, there was an intensive involvement in every aspect of a history-making upwardly mobile decade. These were precedent-shattering times and there were breakthroughs on major fronts: Employment opportunity, housing and school desegregation and public access. All of us were heavily involved in the NAACP, Urban League and Black Press, and given our professional careers, it was also about how to utilize a 70 hour week effectively. If there was any consensus among us at all, it was that the rest of the tribe would move right in behind us, climbing the rungs of the ladders we built; it had always worked that way before, hadn't it? Certainly, in Portland immediately after World War II this was the case. The marching, picketing, striking, pushing and screaming of the new

When Is Enough Not Enough?

immigrant Black population carried the city past the period when there were no Black retail clerks, banktellers, busdrivers, long shermen, supervisors in industry or a public agency, and only a handful of teachers or postal workers. The opportunities for minorities burgeoned to a point.

But, today, as we begin the last decade of the 20th century, Blacks rail at whites, the establishment, and the world in general, "We are still far behind in jobs and promotions-and in education dropouts are accelerating and enrollment in higher education has dropped precipitously since 1980. And on top of this we exclaim, we have developed a huge body of individuals euphemistically described as the underclass or disadvantaged.

Now, think about it, aren't these the very same people who would more right in behind us, climbing the rungs of the ladders we built? What happen? Is Shelby Steele right about a "lack of ability to take responsibility and seize opportunities?"

I could run through a vast litany of "what happened" type recitations. That Black upwardly-mobile middle class moved to suburbia taking with it the economic and political skills necessary to maintain an urban infrastructure of viable housing and school systems, or even retail stores and shops. The neighborhoods of the rung climbers rapidly degenerated and the absentee landlords and developers moved in, utilizing every device from Urban Renewal (Removal) and eminent domain to more sophisticated forms of gentrification. Today, we look at television programs like "Tony Brown's Journal" and we see groups of the black middle class managers and executives lamenting their difficulties and alienation.

"We have titles but we are on soft money in industry, we are on staff, not in line positions--We have no path to the top, and in these days of reorganizations and frequent buyouts we are more insecure than ever. We try to spin out and set up businesses but the banks have no money for us (nevermind the loudly heralded franchise purchases in sports--also 80% of those auto franchises failed)." These television programs are a sad sight indeed, so many brains, so many degrees, so many silk suits, so many Mercedes in the parking lot and so much estrangement from reality, did we do this to our children and ourselves? Next week: Where to go from here?

VANTAGE POINT

Articles and Essays by Ron Daniels

Black Politics At The Crossroads

The recent election may mark a critical crossroad for Black politics in America. Nov. 7 was being heralded as the day that a "new Black politics" was born; the coming of age of a group of African-American politicians who won public office by promoting "mainstream" values and projecting strong appeals to white voters. The great significance of Nov. 7 is that large numbers of white voters in the state of Virginia and the cities of New York, New Haven, Durham, Cleveland and Seattle decisively demonstrated a willingness to vote for Black candidates. What we are witnessing, according to some analysts, is a trend whereby white voters are likely to be increasingly willing to crossover to vote for "mainstream" and "moderate" African-American politicians.

The obvious question which this new trend poses for the future of Black politics is what will be the cost of white voter support or what price will Black politicians have to pay to form Black-white coalitions, particularly in those circumstances where a majority of white votes may be required to gain election? The media's heavy emphasis on "mainstream" and "moderate" somehow suggests that crucial items on the African-American agenda such full-employment, decent wages, affordable housing, health care, education, the right to organize unions, education, civil-rights, and affirmative action are outside of the mainstream. The implication is that the Black Agenda must be set aside or soft peddled in order to address real mainstream issues. In this context "mainstream" may simply come to be a code word for that which is saleable and acceptable to moderate, white, middle America.

African-Americans will need to proceed very cautiously in this new era of new Black politics. The mainstream may be very murky water for African-American concerns and interests. By and large the principal goal of Black politics has been in eradicating the barriers of racial discrimination, economic injustice and to overcome racist violence and oppression. At its best Black protest politics and electoral politics has been at the cutting edge of the struggle to transform America into a new society free of racism, sexism, religious bigotry and economic exploitation. Far from relying on a "moderate" or "conservative" agenda, Black politics has of necessity challenged the status-quo, and put forth a liberal progressive vision and program for change.

We may now be forced to confront a scenario where the powers that be within the ruling elite in America, the two major political parties and the media offer us up "moderate" and "mainstream" Black faces as a means of maintaining cultural, economic and political domination and control. Faced with the prospect of this kind of strategy of cooptation, we as African-Americans must ask ourselves whether we are simply seeking to replace white faces with Black faces in old places, or whether our politics are fundamentally about the liberation of the masses of the Black poor, working people and other oppressed nationalities. If our politics is simply dictated by a desire to get a Black face into public office then what is to prevent us from perpetuating our own oppression by falling for a Ronald Reagan in blackface?

The basic desire of the vast majority of African-Americans is to support and vote for Black candidates because we want a CHANGE in the condition of our people. That's our mainstream agenda. That agenda may well be at odds with others who have a different definition of mainstream and are only willing to support our candidates on terms which mean that the Black Agenda is submerged.

African-Americans must become increasingly aware of the electing Black people to public office does not automatically translate into political empowerment or a change in the condition of the Black masses. For one thing, there are structural barriers within the system at all levels which severely constrain the capacity of even the most well meaning Black elected officials to deliver on the expectation of a change in the quality of life for our people. When these constraints are coupled with the election of African-Americans to office who are not pledged to the Black Agenda, or candidates who feel a necessity to de-emphasize our agenda in pursuit of the white mainstream, then the interests of African-Americans will surely be stuck at the very bottom of the river.

Civil Rights Journal

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Racial Tensions Increase In Miami

During the 1989 Advent season across the nation there are many who are looking toward the traditional holidays as a time for reflection. In the wake of the recent dramatic victories of African-American, Latin-American and other racial and ethnic candidates for elected office at the state and municipal levels, there appears to be growing ground for the improvement of race relations in some sections of the nation.

Yet, in the city of Miami, Florida race relations are not improving. In fact, local elected officials and law enforcement personnel are now predicting and preparing for further racial unrest. One of the primary contributing factors to the tense situation in Miami has been the continued incidents of racially-motivated police brutality and misconduct.

Early in the year, Miami exploded after a Miami police officer killed two unarmed African-Americans who were riding a motorcycle through an African-American section of Miami. Now that the trial of Miami police officer, William Lozano, has begun there are increasing fears that if Lozano is found not guilty in the killing of Clement Floyd and Allan Blanchard, then another riot will erupt.

Ironically, the Chief of Police of Miami is an African-American named Perry Anderson. The tensions in Miami are complex. There is a growing antagonism between Miami's African-American community and the expanding immigrant community in Miami from Central and South America. The trial of Officer Lozano, a thirty-year old Colombian immigrant, has heightened tensions between the African-American and Colombian-American communities in Miami. Spanish-language radio stations in the city have launched fundraising radiothons to help Lozano finance his legal defense. All of this coupled with this city's long legacy of racial discrimina-

tion against the African-American community has now caused Miami to reach the boiling point again.

We caution against the self-fulfilling prophecy attitude of Miami officials including that of Chief Anderson. When the police abuse citizens of any city in America, the situation should be challenged. We believe that there are some forces in Miami, namely in the Miami police department, who are deliberately polarizing the racial situation in hopes that Officer Lozano will be vindicated in the courts as a backlash to the expressed rage of the African-American community.

We are alarmed that given all of the poverty and homelessness in the city of Miami that officials have spent nearly one hundred thousand dollars in preparing for what they believe is "a possibility of a civil disturbance." \$72,000 reportedly has now been spent on a rush order for 700 gas masks for the Miami police department. Chief Anderson has appealed to the judge of the Lozano trial to delay the announcement of the trial verdict until the Miami police department is able to deploy two armored personnel carriers and police officers around the perimeter of the African-American community.

The New York Times reported that Chief Anderson stated, "If a group of individuals plans on having a riot, we will be ready." Racial riots are not planned, they never have been and history shows most riots could have been prevented. Riots do have causative factors. One of the main causative factors to riots specifically in Miami has been the gross insensitivity and racist acts of the Miami police department against the African American community. Rather than arm the police department with more and more weapons of death and destruction, the people of Miami need to work harder at easing tensions not just preparing for more explosions.

The Repentant Racist

by Joel Breshin

"Before I can serve God and go on with my life, I have to clear up my past."
--David Waughtal

On a Friday morning in mid-September, a young man stood before a judge in a Scottsdale, AZ, City courtroom and heard himself sentenced to 12 months probation and the assignment of reading Treblinka, a book about the Holocaust death camp.

This unusual sentence marked the end of a saga for David Waughtal, 24... one that saw him change from an avowed white supremacist who idolized Adolf Hitler and launched a one-man hate campaign against Jews, to a man who has renounced his racist views in favor of religion.

Ironically, one of the first targets of Waughtal's hate campaign--the Anti-Defamation League--played a key role in helping Waughtal find his new life.

The story began in July 1987. During a typically hot Arizona weekend, harassing telephone calls started to come into our regional office in Phoenix. When I picked up the phone, I would hear the voice of a young man, stridently proclaiming: "De Partie es Hitler. Deutschland es Deutschland. You Jews are no longer welcome in Phoenix. You are swine. You are the seed of Satan. Get out before you can't."

Similar calls--some 75 of them--were made to two synagogues in the area and to the home of a rabbi. As the days passed, other Jewish agencies contacted ADL to complain of harassing calls with Hitler-like messages. Some of the calls appeared to be playing recordings of Hitler's actual speeches before a roaring crowd. In all, 12 Jewish agencies in the Phoenix, Scottsdale and Sun City areas received 200 calls spewing hate and venom.

I immediately contacted the police departments in those municipalities. In order to allay fears in the Jewish community and to keep the various Jewish institutions apprised of developments, I arranged a meeting between the victims and the police. Phoenix Police captain Irwin Bankin, a member of ADL's Arizona regional board, who chaired the meeting, assured the assembled group that the identification and capture of the perpetrator was a major police priority.

At subsequent meetings with ADL, police reported narrowing the field of suspects to one person--David Waughtal. Then 21 and an unemployed landscaper, Waughtal was known in the community for distributing the neo-Nazi newspaper WAR (White Aryan Resistance) on the lawns of Central Phoenix homes. I told the police that he had contacted me some months earlier in a cynical attempt to learn what the Anti-Defamation League would do about the forthcoming appearance on a Phoenix cable TV station of Tom Metzger's "Race and Reason" program, spreading Metzger's White Aryan Resistance propaganda. Sub-

sequently I learned that Waughtal and his brother, Glen, and a third individual were the distributors of "Race and Reason" in Phoenix.

In an effort to obtain evidence linking Waughtal to the anti-Semitic telephone calls, we organized the Jewish community to work with the Mountain Bell Telephone Company which placed traces on the telephone lines of several Jewish institutions, including the ADL office.

During the second week of telephone surveillance, the police received the information they had been waiting for. The telephone company had identified the source of the calls--David Waughtal's home. Detectives from the Scottsdale Police Department arrested Waughtal on two counts of telephone harassment. Later, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department arrested him on four similar counts. Following arraignment in these two cases law enforcement officials were to turn him over to the Phoenix Police, who wanted him in connection with the calls made to the ADL office.

When questioned about his motivation for the calls, Waughtal said he did it because "Jews control the media in Phoenix" which, he claimed, prevented him from exercising his right of free speech.

When the day arrived for his arraignment, I was in court along with representatives of other Jewish groups but there was no Waughtal. He had fled the night before.

As a measure to prevent further such incidents, I filed a petition on behalf of ADL for an injunction against harassment, naming David and Glen Waughtal as well as the White Aryan Resistance and other individuals known to be associates of Waughtal.

The harassment ended with Waughtal's disappearance and the story seemed to have ended there, too.

That is what I thought until last July when I received a call from a minister in Eugene, OR, who told me that David Waughtal was a member of his congregation, that he had become very religious, repentant, and that he wanted to return to Arizona to face the charges against him. The minister, the Rev. Allen Stensvad asked if I would assist in arraigning his surrender to authorities in Arizona.

We agreed that Waughtal would turn himself in to the Scottsdale City Court on July 18. I met him beforehand and we discussed his crimes of two years earlier.

Waughtal told me that this inspiration to enter the white supremacy movement came after hearing a talk show on Phoenix radio station KFIY in the mid-1980s featuring Glen Miller, a white supremacist and Ku Klux Klan leader in North Carolina. "I began to read all of Miller's writ-

ings that I could find," he said. "I didn't believe in the Klan," he went on, "but Nazism and the teachings of Adolf Hitler appealed to me. I believed that Jews controlled everything."

"I wanted to get back at them (Jews) in some way," he said. "Harassment on the telephone was kind of like a needle in the giant's side."

When he fled Arizona to avoid his arraignment, Waughtal told me he went to Oregon where he worked at a lumber mill. He gradually began to read the bible and listen to religious programs on the radio. He joined Pastor Stensvad's Berean Baptist Church in Eugene and told the minister of his past. Rev. Stensvad, who said Waughtal has become an active participant in church programs, encouraged him to return to Arizona to face charges.

"Before I can serve God and go on with my life, I have to clear up my past," Waughtal said. "What I did was real dumb... a stupid thing. I am sorry for those I offended. There is no way to take back what I said. I am not looking for leniency. I just want to go on with my life."

I was impressed with his statements of remorse and told him I would help him. Because he was charged in several municipalities, Waughtal had to make appearances in each. In Scottsdale, he was remanded for sentencing until September. He appeared in Peoria, AZ, as a fugitive from the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department and received a sentence of six months probation and 96 hours of community service. In Phoenix, where he pleaded guilty to the charges, he paid a fine and was released.

When he was sentenced in Scottsdale, the prosecutor asked that an example be made of Waughtal to discourage others.

Judge George Preston spoke forcefully about the evils of Nazism and anti-Semitism.

Before passing the unusual sentence, the judge noted Waughtal's repentance, the fact that he had returned voluntarily and his subsequent enrollment at Southwestern College, an American Baptist Bible School.

Since his return to Arizona, Waughtal has spoken openly to the press and on the radio against white supremacy. ADL hopes to arrange speaking engagements for him so that he--like other reformed white supremacists such as Tom Martinez, the former Ku Klux Klansman who blew the whistle on The Order (ADL Bulletin, June, 1988 "What Else I Learned about the Jews")--can serve as a role model for the young people who are so often the targets for recruitment by today's hate mongers.

This Way For Black Empowerment

by Dr. Lenora Fulani

Where Are Black Students At?

On Nov. 15 I went down to the courthouse in Virginia Beach, VA to stand up with the Black college students who had been arrested there over the Labor Day weekend, when local police and state troops went on a rampage against them.

I am working to make clear that the New Alliance Party will support anyone who asks for it. But we can't "play it safe" by responding to such attacks on a case by case basis; if we do, then we'll be doing that non-stop... forever. The "new rapprochement" which has brought the Democratic Party and Republican Party closer and closer together--and further and further to the political right--has created a climate in which no one is representing the working class African-American community, or other oppressed working class communities, and

the right wing is taking advantage of that to come down very hard on our people. That's why we need an ongoing tool, a weapon of our own, to fight back with.

That's what students at Howard University in Washington, D.C. turned to me. The demonstration eventually took place on Nov. 18, the day that several students went to trial. I'm glad I was there and I'll go on being there for the students.

We saw it in the case of the Virginia Beach police wilding; the Black establishment was terrified that a protest by the students would endanger Doug Wilder's chances of becoming America's first elected Black governor. A conservative Democrat, Wilder himself publicly sided with the city government against the young people. A

September 30 demonstration in Virginia Beach planned by the Concerned Black Awareness Council, a coalition of students from several colleges founded in response not only to Virginia Beach but to the rising tide of police violence against our people throughout the country, was stopped dead in its tracks by the national NAACP and senior Black elected officials.

Where are the students at? They are at an "awkward age"--not for any psychological or biological reasons, but because a fight is going on between the Black Democratic Party establishment and progressive independents for the political soul of this new generation. It isn't clear where they will go. At schools like Howard University in Washington and Moorehouse college in Atlanta, they are being groomed to take their place among the Black middle class. A young Moorehouse student who is trying to arrange for me to speak there in January says that most of the young men "are concerned with how much money they can make, rather than doing something more substantial--helping the community."

Or exercise any power. As Virginia Beach revealed, in 1989--two and a half decades after the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act were enacted--Black people, including students with cars and computers and credit cards, are being arrested on trumped up charges, beaten up and hounded out of town for the crime of being Black in white America.

I urged the students to go back to Virginia Beach as new young leaders of NAP--to make clear that they're willing to do whatever needs to be done, to line up with whoever is fighting for them and their communities. They chose not to make that statement this time around. I had told them that either way I'd support them, and I will continue to do so. NAP is a very crucial weapon in this fight. I have been building it for ten years, and I am offering it to anyone who wants to use it. I have been there and I will go on being there for the new generation of Black leaders. The question is, where are they at?

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