

NATIONAL FORUM

ALONG THE COLOR LINE

by Manning Marable

Violence and Crime in the Black Community

Part I of a Two Part Series

Violence in the African-American community has become an epidemic, which no longer shocks or surprises us. Year after year, the carnage and terror becomes worse. Last year, 433 killings occurred in Washington, D.C. alone, up from 369 murders in 1988. Over 1800 were killed in New York City. New Orleans, Philadelphia, Charlotte, Kansas City and other cities broke their records for homicides.

To understand the impact and devastation of violence within the African-American community, we need to review some basic facts. Violent crime, or aggressive offenses which do violence to human beings, consists of homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crimes, or the unlawful seizure of other's property, include burglary, larceny, arson, and motor vehicle theft. There are many other types of offenses which are defined as criminal behavior—including vagrancy, public drunkenness, illegal gambling, prostitution and embezzlement—but the most devastating types of crimes are those in which violence is committed directly against individuals, or in which a person's property is seized by force.

According to the Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics for 1981, the total number of Americans arrested was nearly 9.5 million. Blacks comprise only 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population, but represented 2.3 million arrests, or about one fourth of all arrests. Black arrests for homicide and non-negligent manslaughter were 8,693, or about 48 percent of all murders committed in the U.S. for robbery, which is defined by law as the use of force or violence to obtain personal property, the number of Black arrests was 74,275, representing 57 percent of all robbery arrests. For aggravated assault, the number of African-Americans arrested was 94,624, about 29 percent of all arrests in this category. For all violent and property crimes charged, Blacks totaled almost 700,000 arrests in the year 1979, representing nearly one-third of all such crimes.

One of the most controversial is

violent crimes is the charge of forcible rape. Rape is controversial because of the history of the criminal charge being used against Black men by the white racist legal structure. Thousands of Black men been executed, lynched and castrated for the imaginary offense of rape. Yet rape or forcible sexual violence is not imaginary when African-American women and young girls are victimized. In 1979, there were 29,068 arrests for forcible rape. Black men comprised 13,870 arrests, or 48 percent of the total. Within cities, where three fourths of all rapes are committed, Blacks total 54 percent of all persons arrested for rape.

The chief victims of rape are not white women, but Black women. The U.S. Department of Justice's 1979 study of the crime of forcible rape established that overall, most Black women are nearly twice as likely to be rape victims than are white women.

The research illustrated that in one year, about 67 out of every 100,000 white women would be rape victims; but the rate for Black and other nonwhite women was 115 per 100,000. In the age group 20 to 34 years, the dangers for Black women increases dramatically. For white women age 20 to 34, 139 out of 100,000 are rape victims annually. For Black women the same age, the rate is 292 per 100,000. For attempted rape, white women are assaulted at a rate of 196 per 100,000; Black women are attacked sexually 355 per 100,000 annually.

There is also a direct correlation between rape victimization and income. In general, poor women are generally the objects of sexual assault; middle class women are rarely raped or assaulted, and wealthy women almost never experience sexual assault. The statistics are clear on this point. White women who live in families earning under \$7,500 annually have 500 percent greater likelihood of being raped than white women who come from households with more than \$15,000 income. The gap is even more extreme for African-American women. For Black middle class families, the rate of rape is 22 per 100,000. For welfare and low income families earning below \$7,500 annually, the rate for rape is 127 per 100,000.

for attempted rape, low income Black women are victimized at a rate of 237 per 100,000 annually.

Rape is almost always intraracial, not interracial. Nine out of ten times, a white rapist's victim is a white female. Ninety percent of all Black women who are raped have been assaulted by a Black male. Sexual violence within the African-American community, therefore, is not something "exported" by whites. It is essentially the brutality committed by Black men against our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. It is the worst type of violence, using the gift of sexuality in a bestial and animalistic way, to create terror and fear among Black women.

The form of violence which most directly impacts Black men is homicide. Nearly half of all murders committed in any given year are Black men who murder other Black men. But that's only part of the problem. We must recognize, first, that the homicide rate among African-Americans is growing. Back in 1960, the homicide rate for Black men in the U.S. was 37 per 100,000. By 1979, the Black homicide rate was 65 per 100,000, compared to the white male homicide rate of 10 per 100,000. In other words, a typical Black male has a six to seven times greater likelihood of being a murder victim than a white male.

The chief victims of homicide in our community are young African-American males. Murder is the fourth leading cause of death for all Black men, and the leading cause of death for Black males age 20 to 29 years. In the 1990s, more Black men will kill each other than the total number of American troops killed during the Vietnam War. Today in the U.S., a typical white female's statistical chances of becoming a murder victim are one in 606. For white men, the odds narrow to one chance in 186. For Black women, the odds are one in 124. But for Black men, the chances are one in twenty nine. For young black men living in cities who are between age 20 to 29, the odds of becoming a murder victim are less than one in twenty. Black young men in American cities today are the primary targets for destruction—not only from drugs and police brutality, but from each other.

Black History Can Help Set The Record Straight

NEW YORK—"There is nothing wrong with running fast and having rhythm—unless that is the ONLY perception of the Black contribution," declared Wallace Terry, who admitted that he grew up ignorant of the range of contributions by Black Americans.

In an article to be published this Sunday in 'Parade' magazine, Terry urged Blacks to celebrate Black History Month in order to "wipe away ignorance and arrogance until the time comes when all history is one." He said it is an annual reminder of what has been missing from our movie and TV screens and from the pages of our textbooks.

Terry recalled that his son had once explained a D-minus in history by saying, "Black people don't do well in science."

"When I calmed down, I reminded him that Black scientists and inventors have been serving this nation for generations. For example, George Washington Carver saved the soil of the land that had enslaved him by teaching farmers to rotate their cotton crops with peanuts. Elijah McCoy invented a lubricating cup to oil trains in motion. And Garrett Morgan developed a gas mask that saved thousands in World War I. My son got the message. On the next report card he had an A-plus."



Civil Rights Journal

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Coming To America: President Dos Santos Seeks Peace

Millions of Americans are in a state of excitement and great expectation about the upcoming journey of the President of the People's Republic of Angola to the United States. President Jose Eduardo dos Santos is "coming to America."

President dos Santos is scheduled to arrive in New York City on February 5, 1990 to speak to the United Nations. Thousands of well wishers are now fervently organizing welcoming receptions, solidarity rallies, religious services and other events to welcome this African head of state. While there have been many heads of state from many different nations of the world who have given speeches at the United Nations, we expect the "message of peace" to be delivered by President dos Santos to be enthusiastically received not only by the delegates to the United Nations, but also by the vast majority of the thirty million African-Americans who live in the United States in addition to millions of other Americans who support Angola's quest for peace and development.

It is our hope that in the cities of Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Georgia, and in Los Angeles, California, along with massive turnouts of people in New York City, there will be tremendous expressions of our respect and support of the struggles and victories of the Angolan people when the Angolan President visits these cities.

Certainly, we believe that in the spirit of "peace-making," President Bush should welcome President dos Santos to the White House for constructive talks. It is a sad irony that the foreign policy of the United States presently seeks to destabilize Angola rather than to help this African nation achieve a lasting peace. We also understand that one of the reasons why the Intelligence Committees of both the House and the Senate continue to permit President Bush to give more than one hundred million dollars in military and other aid to the group known as UNITA, which is led by Jonas

Savimbi, and is attempting to destabilize Angola through terrorist and other inhumane acts, is because the voice of the people of the United States has not been heard in Congress on this issue.

In the recent aftermath of the many different ceremonies in tribute to the lasting legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we should recall that Dr. King emphasized the importance of understanding the interrelationship between the struggle here in the United States for justice with the worldwide peace movement. President dos Santos' visit, therefore, provides an excellent opportunity for giving concrete expression to Dr. King's dream of worldwide justice and peace.

Angola today has the highest amputee rate per capita of any nation in the world which is directly attributed to U.S. made land mines that have been deliberately planted in civilian areas by Savimbi's UNITA. The majority of these amputee victims of the war, more than 54,000 are women and children. It is not right for our tax dollars to be used for violence against innocent African women, men and children in Angola.

Thus, we view President dos Santos' trip to the United States as a bold initiative in the quest for peace, not only in Angola but also for peace and economic development for the entire region of southern Africa. Students and community residents surrounding Howard University in Washington, D.C., are in for a special treat when President dos Santos speaks on campus on February 7th. Religious leaders from throughout the nation will be assembling in the historic Riverside Church in New York on Sunday, February 11th for a special "National Ecumenical and Interfaith Service for Peace in Angola" in which President dos Santos, along with the Rev. Jesse Jackson, will participate.

Thank you President dos Santos for coming to America. May your trip be safe and successful.

Proportion of Blacks Living in the South Grows for the First Time This Century, Census Bureau Reports

The proportion of Blacks living in the South increased from 1980 to 1988, the first such rise in this century, according to a report on the black population released today by the Commerce Department's Census Bureau.

Fifty-six percent of all Blacks resided in the South in 1988, compared with 52 percent in 1980. The proportion had declined since the beginning of the century when it was 90 percent. Census Bureau experts say the growing concentration is likely to continue well into the next century.

The Northeast is the only region in the 1980s to show a significant decline in its proportion of Blacks, dropping from 19 percent to 17 percent. The proportion for the Midwest (19%) and West (8%) did not change significantly.

The number of Blacks living in the South totaled 16.4 million in 1988, an increase of 2.8 million since 1980. However, for the rest of the nation, there was no significant change in the number of Blacks at 12.9 million in 1988.

* The ratio of Black-to-White family median income in the North and West at 58 percent in 1987 was not significantly different from the south at 56 percent.

* Black families in the South in 1987 had a higher poverty rate (31%) than those in the North and West (28%).

* Black married-couple families in the South comprised 53 percent of all Black families in 1988 compared with 49 percent in the North and West. The proportion of Black female householder families with no husband present was 41 percent in the South, and 45 percent in the North and West.

* Seventy-five percent of Blacks in the North and West lived in central cities compared with 43 percent in the South.

NATIONAL

* The median earnings of Black women who worked year round and full time increased by 7.8 percent (\$14,840 to \$16,000) from 1979 to 1987. The earnings, of comparable Black men at \$19,010 in 1987 were not significantly different from their earnings in 1979. As a result, the median earnings ratio of Black women to Black men

Nationwide the Black population numbered 29.3 million in March 1988, an increase of 14 percent since 1980; the White population grew by 10 percent to 203.9 million. The Black proportion of the total population rose from 11.7 percent in 1980 to 12.2 percent in 1988, the report says.

Here are additional highlights from the report:

REGIONAL

* Four out of five Blacks in the South aged 25 to 34 had completed high school in 1988, a proportion not significantly different from those in the North and West; historically, Blacks in the North and West had higher educational attainment levels. For Whites, however, the proportion in the North and West completing high school was higher than in the South.

* The 1987 median income of black families living in the South at \$17,300 was 10 percent lower than in the North and West where it was \$19,120. The median income of White families in the South at \$30,730 was 8 percent lower than in the North and West at \$33,130.

increased from 0.74 in 1979 to 0.84 in 1987.

* The unemployment rate for Blacks in 1988 was 11.7 percent compared with 4.7 percent for Whites. Unemployment among Black teenagers was 32.4 percent compared with 13.1 percent for White teenagers.

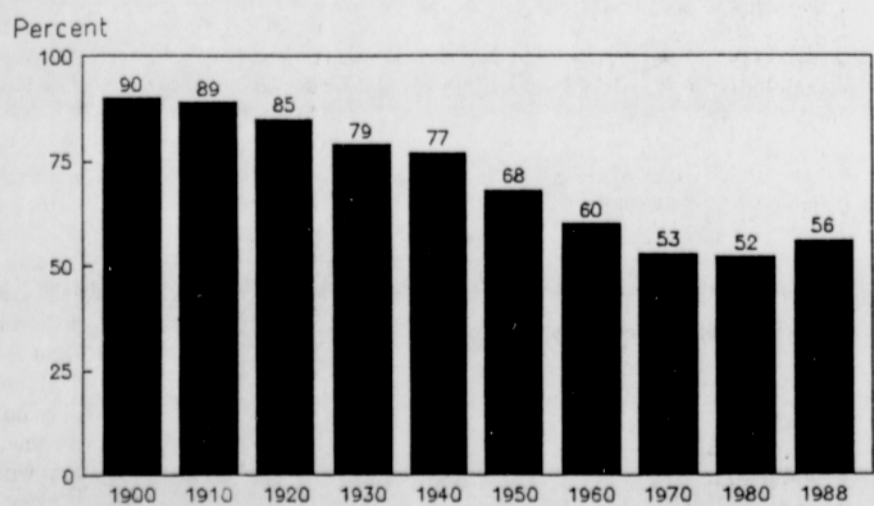
* Black females outnumbered Black males by 1.9 million in 1988; there were 100 Black females for every 88 Black males. Among Whites, there were 100 females for every 96 males.

* The median age of Blacks in March 1988 was 27.3 years, up from 24.8 years in 1980. The median was 25.8 years for Black males and 28.6 years for Black females.

The Census Bureau plans to continue publishing reports in the P-20 population characteristics series on the social and economic status of Blacks in America.

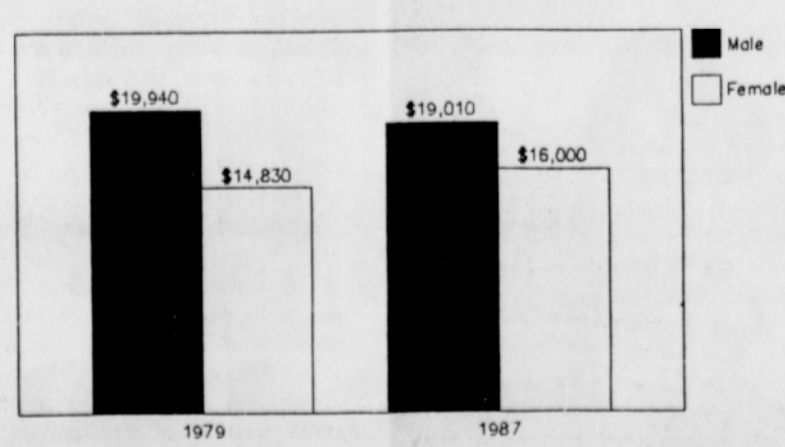
Copies of *The Black Population in the United States: March 1988, Series P-20, No. 442*, are available prepaid from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

PERCENT OF THE BLACK POPULATION LIVING IN THE SOUTH: 1900 TO 1988



SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

MEDIAN EARNINGS OF BLACK PERSONS WORKING YEAR ROUND AND FULL TIME, BY SEX: 1979 AND 1987 (In 1987 dollars)



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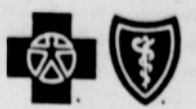
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