

Black Women

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the North that new corruptions, deteriorating relationships, unemployment and ghettos made life almost unbearable.

By the 1920s, however, black women were closer to becoming economically self-sustaining. They were going to college in greater numbers and working in a wider range of interesting jobs and professions.

By 1952, black women were the recipients of more than 62 percent of the degrees obtained from black colleges. Black women were also working in professions and semiprofessions in greater numbers than ever before, but their wages were still lower than those of black men.

The 60s brought new energy and life for the black woman, with the civil rights movement and the integral weaving of men and women in the fight for equality. As Maria Golden writes, and I couldn't agree with her more, "I'm glad I came of age in the sixties. Becoming a woman during such an optimistic, challenging time gave me a way to look at the world and my place in it that is enduring and expansive. And now the sixties are not nostalgia: they're not history. The best of the sixties is simply the way I live." Many other women coming of age in

that era feel the same way. We all carry an indelible mark of pride that can never be erased.

Over the last 20 years, black women have indeed come a long way. We can be found in every field and every profession. But our progress has not been a total success. As a group, black women are still among the lowest-paid workers in this country. We are heading almost half of all black families with unemployment on the rise for black single mothers. Our teenagers are having more out-of-wedlock babies than any other ethnic group in the country. And, as babies themselves, they face a gloomy and uncertain future.

On the plus side, black women are running for political office in record numbers and winning. Today, black females make up almost one-fourth of all blacks in public office. We are becoming managers and holding administrative, technical and executive positions in businesses of all kinds. Many of us are even heading our own companies.

Yet, our progress is not a cause for celebration for some. We are often accused unjustly of taking jobs that black men should have. This misconception is one that particularly galls me. Yet, this notion is so prevalent that a

feature article on the subject was printed recently in *Ebony* magazine. In that article, however, a point was made that perhaps the blame is misplaced.

A Washington psychologist was quoted in the article as saying that an achievement for a black woman is truly an achievement for all blacks. "If a black woman achieves rank and power," she said, "then doors can be opened for black males," and we are all better off because of this.

It should also be remembered that once a black woman advances in a profession, there's no guarantee that she will not face many barriers. Racism and sexism still exist today. And the black woman is more vulnerable to both.

A recent study of job-related stresses among black women further revealed that we also have many health problems related to our new successes. High blood pressure, gastric ulcers, colitis and heart disease are only a few of these.

As black female professionals, we are expected to leap over tall buildings without tearing our pantyhose, out-run speeding bullets without mussing our hair and stop oncoming trains with a full-toothed grin.

However, juggling the

demands of a career with personal relationships or family needs can produce anxiety, frustration and unhappiness for the black female achiever. For many there is no one to talk to and no one to listen or understand. Loneliness and alienation are not uncommon.

Also, today power is still seen as a "masculine trait. So, the more we black women achieve, the more our femininity is questioned. That makes some of us insecure. We must raise the consciousness of black women," says Jewel Jackson McCabe. "So that we understand that there is no contradiction between being a woman, being feminine and being in the highest echelons of power." We must also strive to defuse the threat that some black men may feel ... and that can be a tall order.

Being empowered does not mean that black women are actively seeking to displace or discredit black men. Empowerment means that black women have the strength, knowledge and courage to know what they want and the gusto to get it. Black women who are winners are claiming health, wealth and happiness with a stronger self-esteem that's fed from within.

We are the original "super-

through all of black history. The posture of a "me-only" attitude will inevitably increase the kind of disharmony and friction that can insidiously destroy the golden spirit and endurance that is our legacy. We as black women can't afford to let this happen.

For us, the search for empowerment can be confusing and complicated.

The greater challenge, however, is "not to make a living, but to make a life," wrote W.E.B. DuBois many years ago.

Our foremothers strove successfully to embrace the essence of these words in their actions and their love. The black women of today must also be committed to continue to raise the standards beyond survival in order to leave a legacy of "living" for others to follow.

We face today a variety of social, economic and emotional barriers that separate black men from black women. But the threats are as much in our hearts and minds as in our environment. Using our collective strengths and history, we must begin to understand, appreciate and celebrate each other more. Let us now begin.

Reggae

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tant tunes was simply named "Burnin' and Lootin'."

Another, "Get Up, Stand Up," berates the minister who tells his flock to wait for liberation after death, and one of his last songs dealt with the turmoil in Zimbabwe.

Ironically, Marley probably died with more white fans than he did black ones, particularly in America, where reggae music has taken some time to catch on among blacks, even though many American artists are using its elements in their music (the white ones call it "New Wave," although it has been around for decades).

Cinnamon leader Joe Daniels said reggae music is "a vehicle for total expression."

He also said the media overplayed his band's statement. "They can take a piece of dust

and write an article about it," he said. "We were just giving a concert and mentioning some facts during the concert."

Daniels, who, in the tradition of many reggae musicians, wears his hair in braid-like "dread locks," said the decision to pay tribute to Hunt was made by the band only a day before the concert. He said the concert wasn't so much a statement that Hunt was innocent as it was a call for him to be tried fairly.

"It could have been either one of us," he said of Hunt's arrest. "We didn't know that people were going to be tripping as much as they were."

As for whether the Arts Council will hire Cinnamon for future concerts, Daniels, who said he planned to talk to Arts Council officials about the concert, said

he doesn't know, nor will the decision be earthshaking one way or the other.

"If we depended on them for our livelihood, we would have starved a long time ago," he said of the Arts Council. "If we play (for the Arts Council) again, fine. If not, it will be obvious what they are trying to do to us."

Callison said Arts Council Ac-

ting Director Bill Burton will contact Daniels soon to talk about the concert.

Meanwhile, Hunt will soon face a jury that will make a more consequential decision: Will he live or die?

And, as lunchtime music lovers found out Friday, everyone in this town is watching and waiting.

Letters

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There's an individualism here in the Triad that evidences the last holdout here, ladies and friends, of the original "Southern" scalawag -- that profiteering leech on the economy of the poor, and sometimes the lives of "the darker brother."

Carl R. Martin
Winston-Salem

More Bitburg fallout

To The Editor:

Recently our president traveled to Germany. On this trip, he visited the German military cemetery at Bitburg to pay tribute to the 2,000 German soldiers buried there. Among those graves are 49 marked with the SS. These men were Adolf Hitler's special guard, the Schutzstaffel.

It is hoped by many who gave their youth and by some who spilled their blood that our president is aware:

- of the oath of the SS -- "I swear to thee, Adolf Hitler, as Fuehrer and Chancellor of the German Reich, loyalty and bravery; I vow to thee and to the superiors whom thou shall appoint, obedience unto death, so help me God."

- of the enthusiastic response of SS Security Chief Reinhard Heydrich upon being assigned the SS directorship of the "Final Solution," which led to the death of more than 12 million innocent people in more than 100 major extermination installations, in-

cluding Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Mauthausen, Belzec, Auschwitz and Treblinka.

- of the murder of 86 GIs near Malmedy, Belgium, by soldiers of the 1st SS Panzer Division.

- of the shooting in the back of a soldier of the 83rd Infantry Division by a member of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, "Gotz Von Berlichinger," in Normandy.

It is the prayer of many Americans that the visit to Bitburg will remind us of this dark period in human history and will, in the words of the United Nations Charter, "Reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in equal rights for men and women of Nations large and small." To this form of thinking about the human person, the Nazi SS was diametrically opposed. This should never be forgotten.

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