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The harassment of Black elected officials in our time has not had consequences as severe. But having once occurred, the potential is ever present."

While those statements provide a warning bell which the Black community should heed, the accompanying statistics must sound an ominous alarm that rallies the forces of the community whose political future is in imminent danger. The report cites (in 1987) approximately 500,000 elected public officials in the United States, of which slightly more than 6,400 - roughly 1.3 percent - are Black.

The strategy being used now has been updated from the days of Reconstruction, reflecting the power of today's highly-technological, world-reaching media to try Black officials in the court of public opinion. Those targeted are investigated, accused, tried, and convicted in media publications and broadcasts before ever coming to a court of law to face a jury of their "peers."

It's crucial for the Black community to understand how manipulative and dangerous this

strategy is. Developed and refined by Joseph Goebbels, Nazi minister of propaganda during World War II, it was implemented masterfully by "Der Fuhrer," Adolph Hitler to seize political control and commit genocide on millions of Jews.

The effectiveness of that media strategy was recently seen in the gubernatorial race in Louisiana. The irony of it, however, was that David Duke, former member of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi sympathizer, was defeated soundly by the very strategy of the dictator he has been quoted as admiring. In Duke's case, Louisianans decided that a philandering womanizer and gambler was infinitely preferable to the political and racial upheaval that Duke represents.

registration for the Louisiana election increased with Blacks manning the phones and actively taking a part in defeating a man they feared would really damage their freedom - political and otherwise. It proves that, given proper direction, fear, threats, and intimidation can be turned into positive power.

What blacks need to understand is

how effective insinuation, intimidation, fear, negative coercion, and "press leaks" can be. If those tactics can be used as key elements of a strategy to deny a white man - because of his views - political access, what about today's "uppity" Black politicians and leaders?

"What's happening today is just the post-1965 Civil Rights' New Reconstruction version of an old song."

Manipulating the fear that Blacks have today of virtually everything works. We're afraid of our jobs and being laid off or fired, of getting sick and not being able to afford care, of losing our homes, of each other, and of our own shadows. But, most of all, we're scared to death of the white man. That causes divisive behavior. Abraham Lincoln, called "The Great Emancipator" (for historically-inaccurate

reasons), said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." He was right. Black fear over being on the "wrong" side of a controversial investigation or trial of a Black leader or political official very effectively splits a community that needs all the unity it can get.

The Hitler-Goebbels strategy of making selected people the targets of witchhunts and trial by the court of manipulated public opinion represents the same kind of thinking that lynched Blacks throughout American history. What's happening today is just the post-1965 Civil Rights' New Reconstruction version of an old song. We must not fail to heed the signs.

Our ancestors understood that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance and that the price is often high. We owe a debt to everyone who struggled, fought, bled, and died to keep the light of freedom bright for Blacks. That freedom includes the right to participate in the political process at all levels without fear of harassment or other reprisals. We also owe our children a future that shows them they, not any oppressors, are our next leaders.

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families are headed, the argument doesn't even hold water. The majority of Black families living in today's black community will never have a financial means to move into integrated communities.

Not only that, by taking our kids out of the community for education and training, they seem to develop a latent disrespect for things (both tangible and intangible) in the Black

opinions and pass them on to the kids. As a result, the young Blacks who are successful refuse to return to give something back to the community in which they were raised.

It is high time for the Black community to become accountable for the training of its youth. Not just token treatments, but full-scale programs to keep kids in touch with who they are. Black churches must practice what they preach. They must find a way to have a meaningful impact on today's kids. It's not enough to just give Black kids lip service; something more substantive has to be done.

One of the solutions to this problem could be for Black churches to develop their own schools and other types of training programs. Perhaps that is the only way to ensure that some Black kids will rise to the top of their classes and become leaders. It would also help them identify with the institutions that are within the community.

The training we need is not totally educational. We must train our kids to know what economic reciprocity means—spending money with those people who spend money

with us. That is the only way a circular flow of money will be developed.

Our kids also need to have spiritual training. They need to grow up in the fear and admonition of God. That could be the link that is missing in today's world. Our kids are quick to fire a weapon

because they believe in retaliating. Some even boast that they don't mind going to jail and doing the time. But maybe if they believed there is a higher power than human flesh, they might begin to think before acting. And, after all, wouldn't that be a greater deterrent than prison sentences?

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community. To them, white becomes right. The institutions in the Black community no longer carry the same significance.

Perhaps the most amazing thing of all is that many white educators, coaches and the like, have enough gall to encourage Black youth to deny their upbringing. Some even go to the extreme of categorizing the type of people who come out of certain black communities or neighborhoods. They draw generalizations based upon their own

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