

# Forum

## Stop Bush's anti-civil rights backlash

The debate over the Civil Rights Act of 1991 continues. The Bush administration continues to mislabel the bill as "a quota bill." As we have stated before, the essence of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 is to prevent employment discrimination.

We are now seeing a glimpse

tial treatment based on race or on other factors. The "movement" must define its goals and objectives clearly to avoid the traps that are now being laid in regard to the upcoming vote on the Civil Rights Act of 1991 in the Congress. The point here is that these same strategies of mislabeling and mis-defin-

crimination and preferential treatment. If there is a difference between the 1960's and the 1990's, it is the role of the federal government. Today it is the White House and the Supreme Court that have instituted consistent efforts to deny equal opportunity, racial justice, and affirmative action.

We suggest that the greatest challenge that the civil rights movement has in the 1990's is "to pull the sheets off" of the blatant, racist immorality that is now being fostered by the highest authorities in the land.

Rather than negotiate a compromise of principles with representatives of the White House concerning Bush's objections to the Civil Rights Act, civil rights leaders need to expose the whole affair for what it has become, i.e. a racist backlash against civil rights and racial progress.

In addition, we must learn and remember that previous civil rights legislation was enacted by Congress only when there was a massive, grassroots mobilization. Every single community throughout the nation needs to demand that Congress votes in favor of the bill and to override any veto by President Bush. Now is the time once again to act.

### CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS JR.

of the 1992 Presidential Campaign, which promises to be even more racist oriented than the 1988 campaign. Racially-charged, political advertisements have increased. The civil rights movement must not allow the Civil Rights Act of 1991 to become a victim of a larger political strategy of the right-wing of the Republican party.

The term "quota" has become synonymous to "racial preference" or "special preferential treatment for minorities." In fact, the established media, as it is informed by right-wing theoreticians, often characterizes the "civil rights movement" as a movement for preferen-

ing the issues will continue into the 1992 Presidential race.

History is always an important antidote to the political mythology of a given era. The truth is that the civil rights movement of the 1950's and the 1960's was never about some type of "preferential racial treatment." The goals and objectives of the "movement" were justice and freedom and equality for all without discrimination due to race, religion, gender or any other factor.

It is a true inversion of history for the forces of American racism to attempt to accuse and describe the "movement" as being for preferen-

## Winnie's verdict inconsequential

Winnie Mandela has been convicted and sentenced to six years in prison on kidnap and accessory-to-assault charges, but while the wife of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela awaits an appeal of her case in Johannesburg, South Africa, I doubt that the trial's out-

comes really mattered in South Africa anyway? But I'll not debate the judge's verdict, and take it at face value. Let's say Mrs. Mandela is guilty.

Dr. Ted Hemmingway, noted scholar and authority on African culture and professor of history at

Because I don't know if she's guilty, I have no opinion on whether Mrs. Mandela should spend any time in prison, but like Hemmingway, I cannot envision the anti-apartheid movement being significantly affected by whatever happens to her.

Hemmingway said that kind of personal sacrifice is what keeps the anti-apartheid movement going in South Africa and it's the kind of sacrifice most American blacks refuse to make.

As he spoke, I thought of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., saying in one of his final speeches, "I don't care what happens to me now..." Too many of us do care what happens to us rather than what happens to our people. We care enough to complain about injustice but not enough, for example, to put a job on the line to fight it, when the only reason we have the job is because others put their lives on the line for us.

More of us should be like Winnie Mandela. Guilty or not she may go to prison, but in the overall scheme of things, that really doesn't matter. After showing no emotion as she was being sentenced, outside the court she raised her fist to a cheering crowd and shouted defiantly, "The struggle goes on."

### AGAINST THE GRAIN

By ROOSEVELT WILSON

come will have any significant effect on the anti-apartheid movement, regardless of the results of the appeal.

Mrs. Mandela and two co-defendants had been charged in the December 1988 abduction and beating off our men aged 14 to 29. Prosecutors said the young men were beaten in Mrs. Mandela's Soweto home because they were spies for the police or homosexuals.

It is futile to try to fathom the truth when the judge — South Africa does not have jury trials — called Mrs. Mandela and her co-defendants blatant liars. Since when has the guilt or innocence of

Florida A&M University, said it doesn't matter and won't affect the anti-apartheid movement. "South African blacks have a culture of committing themselves to a cause much bigger than themselves, and their personal well being is of little consequence."

Hemmingway said if Mrs. Mandela is guilty, it's unfortunate that she was busted on what could be viewed as ancillary charges and on the heels of her husband's having spent 27 years in prison for fighting apartheid, but "I'm sure if she is guilty, at the time she thought she was doing what was right to further the cause."

## Census reflects America's changing racial mix

The Census Bureau recently released figures that document dramatic changes in America's racial and ethnic composition.

They show that the 1980s were a decade of breathtaking minority growth, and that America has become more racially diverse than ever.

About one-fourth of all Americans are now non-whites, and minorities are growing at a

grew by over 50 percent to over 22 million, while the numbers of Asians and Pacific Islanders more than doubled.

The Bureau also found wider dispersion of minorities throughout the nation. Many states that once had very small numbers of African-Americans and other minorities now have significant and fast-growing minority settlements.

minorities.

A multi-racial nation has to combat the racism and prejudice that keep people down. Failure means rising inter-group tensions and minority disadvantage that ultimately drag everybody down.

Today, it is fashionable to focus on the internal weaknesses of minority communities as if they existed in a vacuum and did not reflect the results of racism and discrimination.

Racial and ethnic stereotyping has replaced thinking—it's become an excuse to ignore the real problems of racism and poverty.

Those of us who try to get at the root causes of disadvantage are told that if blacks or Hispanics just tried harder, their problems would be solved.

Well, African-American and other minorities have been trying harder for centuries. But while many individuals have made extraordinary progress the persistence of group disadvantage indicates that the solutions to minority problems require broader changes in our society.

The Census Bureau's population figures also suggest that those minority problems are no longer confined to minorities but

### TO BE EQUAL

By JOHN E. JACOB

much faster rate than the white population.

In the 1980s, African-Americans grew by three and one half million to some 30 million people, or 12 percent of all Americans. To put that another way, there are more black Americans than there are citizens of Canada.

In addition, experts say the census undercounted blacks by about two million, so the true figure is about 32 million.

The 1980s also saw rapid growth among Hispanics and Asians.


The Hispanic population

The changing racial and ethnic face of the nation suggests important policy imperatives for our society.

We need to recognize the diversity of America's population by eliminating discriminatory practices and the racial and ethnic stereotypes that undergird them.

Public opinion surveys show the strength of such prejudicial attitudes. One recent survey released in January by the National Opinion Research Center found that a majority of whites hold persistent negative stereotypes of blacks and other

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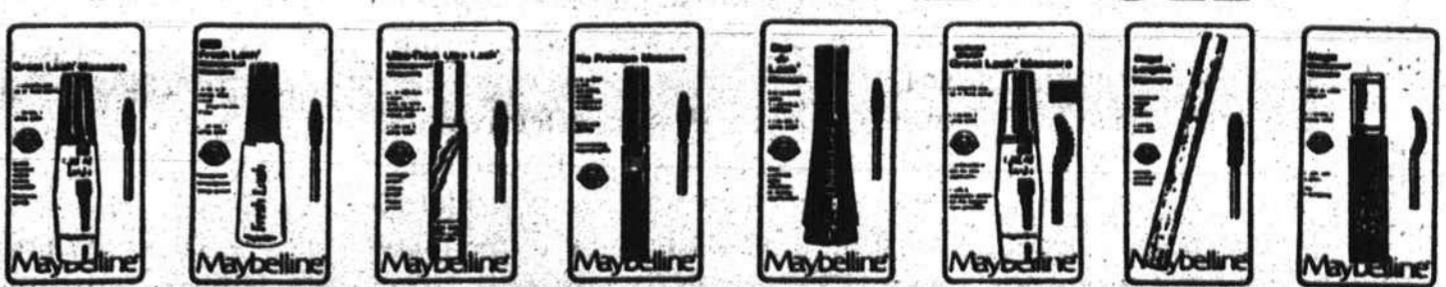
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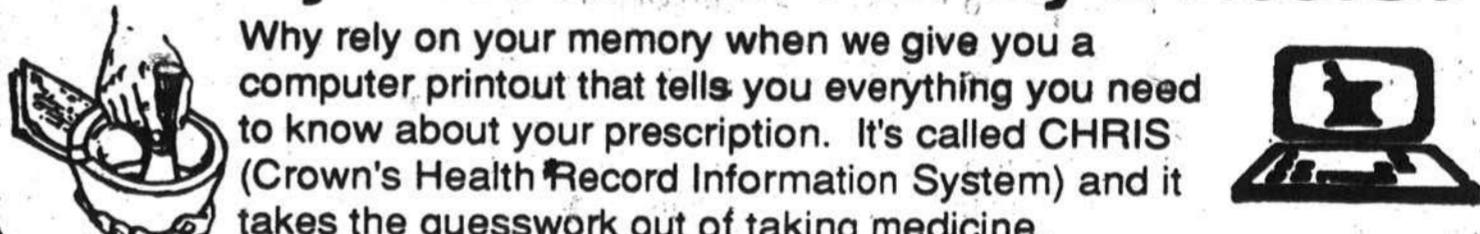
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