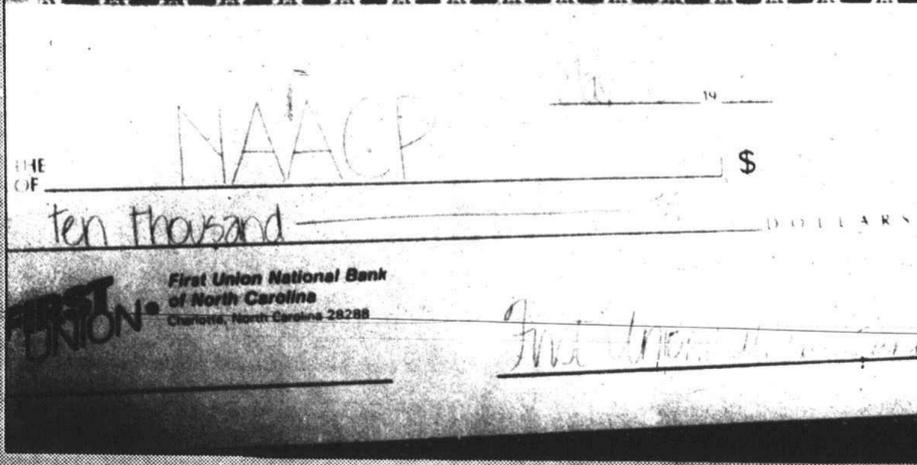


## First Union contributes to NAACP '92 convention



First Union Corp., the nation's 12 largest bank holding company, headquartered in Charlotte, has made a \$10,000 contribution to the NAACP to help defray expenses connected with the association's 1992 annual convention, scheduled July 12-16, in Nashville, Tenn. This year's convention, which will mark the last time Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks appears at the event as the NAACP's Executive Director/CEO is expected to attract one of the largest turnouts in recent years. Dr. Hooks who announced his retirement last February, will deliver his final keynote address on Sunday, July 12. Pictured (l-r) Lenny Springs, vice-president of First Union Corp. and Dr. Benjamin Hooks.



## The games people play Continued from page A1

and their subculture tolerates self destructive behavior and encourages taking risks."

The report concludes that even the most heartfelt warning from a competent and well-loved spokesman such as Magic Johnson is likely to be dismissed as being irrelevant. "Even appeals to their African-American sensibilities are also likely to be ineffective — perceived as being an imposed burden."

Perhaps the most telling observation of the entire report is the conclusion that "African-American inner city teenagers are far more certain of who they are *not* than who they are, and their efforts at self definition, even those they know to be antisocial and self destructive, are defended on the grounds that they are at least authentic. In other words, they would rather die than be the hypocrites we are!

### Moral mutes

What the report didn't say was that as adults, we former young people are in many ways just like the youth. We are still playing games with ourselves, still subject to peer pressure as they are.

Indeed, the irony of all ironies, our very own inauthenticity is the very thing that is feeding their rejection of any of our so-called mainstream values. They see us as phonies and I guess they are right.

It is easy to see why they would think such a thing. One need only look at just how difficult it is for many of us to stand up for what we know to be right. Just think of how we as black folks have fallen away from the high moral ground that we once occupied so proudly. Many of us are living in virtual house arrest.

Some of us are so silent on the questions of what is right and wrong that we are moral mutes. We don't see no evil, hear no evil. We are so blind that we either refuse to, or we can't see how we as black folks are being destroyed from within, by our very own kind.

Like America, we have fallen into the trap of fearing the Communist, meanwhile the real danger is coming from within.

The report suggests that "many of our children fall victim to a spiral of silence which inhibits the free discussion of controversial issues to the point that even a majority of opinions can become suppressed because the subjects are too dangerous to broach. Many would rather risk death than subject themselves to the hazard of ostracism by raising the issue such as safe sex or drug abuse."

In other words, they seem to be looking for the right thing to do but want to do it without losing the approval of group.

### Do we have the will power?

It just may be that the number one problem facing black folks in this country is not white racism, drug abuse, welfare dependency, lack of education, or a lack of resources. It may be that our number one problem is a lack of will power.

We as a nation, including us black folks, apparently lack the will to move beyond the present morays in which we find ourselves. Indeed, while the nation is facing a budget deficit, we are facing a deficit of willpower. We are falling victim to the American lure of amorality and valuelessness. We too have fallen under the spell of Einstein's relativity — where everything is relative and everything is irrelevant.

We have been lulled into the complete state of refusing to accept personal responsibility. Just as our children, we have been lured into a silent war with the truth. We are afraid of it. There is no consequence for our behavior.

We have adopted the same kind of silent conspiracy about our own

personal behavior as those who are in our group. We know what is right and what is wrong, but now we lack the will to stand up and say so. We have plenty who are willing to stand up and say what is wrong with the white man, what is wrong with George Bush, what the government ain't doing, and what the preachers ain't doing.

But the question is: when are we — you, and I — going to be willing to say what we as a people are not doing? When are we going to get to the place where we criticize each other within our own group, regardless of whether white folks listen in or not?

Our children need us to be able to stand up and say what is wrong and what is right — to take our lumps for

it; to not excuse everything they say and everything they do.

We criticize our children for not withstanding the rigors of peer pressure, but yet, we then turn right around and do the exact same thing that they have done. We too, are afraid of the power of peer group pressure — of being ostracized.

It is a deadly standoff. Our children are busy killing themselves, begging us to help them deal with peer pressure and we are too scared to give them the hand that they really need for fear of peer pressure.

I guess it's understandable, afterall, no one wishes to be called an Uncle Tom.

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