

editorials

Comments

Black Plight—"Disastrous"

Among the achievements of blacks in 1983 was congressional passage of a bill to make Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday, the selection of blacks as both "Miss America" and the first runner-up, and the sending of a black astronaut into space. At the local level, achievement and progress were seen in the election of Charlotte's first black mayor, Harvey Gantt.

Not too surprising, it was Mayor Gantt, keynote speaker at the celebration of the 55th anniversary of the birth of Dr. King, who said that while progress by and for blacks has been made, "we still have much work to do. Many

of our white friends are lulled into a sense of security and righteousness when they look around and see how far black folks have come."

Anyone who does not believe or understand Mr. Gantt's message simply needs to read the 1984 report on the "State of Black America" recently released by the National Urban League. The report offers a depressing assessment in which it charges that poor black people are being relegated to "an out-of-sight,

out-of-mind" status in American society. NUL President John Jacob said in releasing the report last week, "The state of black America is disastrous. While white Americans celebrate a long-overdue economic recovery and a falling unemployment rate, black America is buried in a depression of crush-

ing proportions. The plain, ugly fact is that there is no recovery for black Americans."

The report restated the widely known fact that the nation's overall unemployment declined to 8.4 percent in November, 1983, the lowest rate in two years; however, it remained at 17.3 percent for blacks. The report added that joblessness among black teenagers has reached 49 percent and that one-third of black workers aged 20 to 24, are out of work. Furthermore,

blacks now make up one-third of a classification of people in the labor force called discouraged workers or people who have given up any hope of ever finding gainful employment. It is largely for these reasons that

half of all black children live in households with incomes below the poverty level. Therefore, the report states, millions of black Americans are "still mired in poverty and hopelessness."

This kind of disturbing data contributed to the report taking a sharp and critical stand against the Reagan Administration's study on hunger and what Mr. Jacob called an "unholy alliance" between the new U.S. Civil Rights Commission and the U.S. Justice Department against affirmative action programs.

One of the few positive notes in the report cited the increased political activity by blacks that should result in a greater sensitivity to issues affecting black Americans.

Raise Academic Standards

To say that blacks, especially black youth, can climb above the poverty that keeps so many out of the mainstream of America is to support and be committed to the emerging need to raise the academic standards of our schools.

In neighboring South Carolina, Gov. Dick Riley made the issue clear in his 1984 State of the (SC) State address in noting that S.C. has too many people dependent on welfare, too many illiterate adults who can't find jobs and that the state spends more annually on prisoners than it does on educating children. These facts are evident, Gov. Riley adds, by "the simple truth that for years test scores in our public schools have trailed the national average... (therefore). "We are

sending them (our children) into the world to be victims of change."

Many of the black youth in the Carolinas and nationwide are victims of such change, in that even with a high school diploma,

too few are prepared for the hi-technology computer-oriented world that we live in today.

Therefore, black youth and their parents must become philosophically committed to higher values in education and then pursue excellence in a quest for the best possible education

available. The time is now to begin seriously breaking the cycle of poverty if black youth are to share fully in the fruits of America's future.

BLACK HISTORY

"A Race is Like A Man-Until It Uses Its Own Talents, Takes pride In Its Own History. And Loves Its Own Memories, It Can Never Fulfill Itself Completely."



Medical Care Is No Joke

Special To The Post
A recent newspaper cartoon depicts a doctor talking to a patient in the examining room. The doctor says, "I want you to undergo some tests, Mr. Dinwiddle, to see how much medical care you can afford."

That's amusing - until you realize that for millions of Americans, paying for health care is no joke. Nor is it a matter taken lightly by corporations, which are familiar with a big part of the problem: employee medical benefits. Those benefits pay a large part of America's medical bill and the costs are increasing faster than the overall cost of living. In 1981 American business spent an estimated \$4 billion on health insurance, up 231 percent since 1969.

To be sure, that money has to come from somewhere - from employees, who may get smaller raises, from shareholders, whose dividends come from what's left after expenses are covered, or from customers in form of higher prices.

None of those choices is particularly palatable, so increasingly corporations are taking three basic steps to help hold down medical benefit costs.

One, companies are tightening internal controls of medical benefit costs. Unlike insurance for cars or homes, where people are acutely aware of the costs, health insurance is generally paid for

you by "someone else."

A typical scenario: An employee gets sick and sees a doctor, who puts him in a hospital, which sends a bill, which is paid by an insurance company, which obtains the money from premiums, most of which are paid by an employer. In essence, no one really seems accountable; the cost is simply passed on. Not surprisingly, then, the cost keeps rising.

Two companies are coming more deeply involved in long-range health care planning and cost-cutting efforts in conjunction with other companies and the health care industry. It's an encouraging trend. To get a firmer grip on the problem, business people must work more closely with people in all segments of society. Too often all sides have just thrown darts at each other.

And three, companies are offering employees alternatives to the traditional health care delivery system.

For example, employees at TRW can receive treatment at health maintenance organizations (HMOs), which provide a broad range of prepaid medical services. Recent studies show that HMOs can cut health care costs significantly, in part because participants tend to see their doctors more frequently, before an illness requires hospitalization.

The point of all this is to gain a greater measure of control over a situation

toward which companies have traditionally taken a resigned, hands-off attitude.

Certainly, companies have a responsibility to hold down medical costs, to help keep them affordable. Otherwise, Mr. Dinwiddle - and all the rest of us - could be in real trouble.

Spring Semester

A graduate course on designing learning experiences for adults will be taught at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Staff Development Center during the spring semester.

Offered through the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Office of Continuing Education and the College of Human Development and Learning, the course will be taught by Dr. Evelyn Davis. Dr. Davis has had considerable experience teaching adults as well as adult educators, administrators and group leaders.

The course will meet Thursdays, January 19 to April 26, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Staff Development Center at 428 W. Boulevard. Designed for teachers, trainers and administrators of adult classes, the course can be used as an elective in a number of UNCC master's degree programs.

The course may be taken for graduate or undergraduate credit. The cost is \$135.

From Capitol Hill

Increasing Racial Bitterness

Agenda 1983, Heritage Foundation, Chapter X: Studies should be ordered from the Commission on Civil Rights to determine the extent to which affirmative action and related policies discriminating against white males are increasing racial bitterness. Justice Department should file an amicus brief in the Boston Police case. Justice Department should resist goals and quotas, resist race-conscious solutions of any type." Writers of this chapter remain anonymous. Since White House Chief Counselor Ed Meese told this reporter "It is the responsibility of Clarence Pendleton and others to communicate to the black community the President's goals and objectives," and Pendleton admitted to this reporter that he was a good friend of Meese, coupled with the fact that this chapter relates views of conservative blacks, Walter Williams and Thomas Sowell, with Meese's admission to this reporter that an organization to which he belongs sponsored the San Francisco meeting that Sowell held to set up a black conservative organization and Meese's speech before the New Coalition, a fair assumption is that Mr. Meese had a hand in making the five Reagan appointments and the staff director of the



Alfred B. Buzel, new Civil Rights Commission.

The Reagan appointments share, despite heartedly, the above views of the Foundation. Research of the records of these Commissioners seem to prove this fact.

Morris Abrams has been hailed as a person with a marvelous civil rights record. His civil rights activities were during the 60's when attention was focused on discrimination in the South, that many northerners found it popular to jump on the bandwagon, but when the battle against discrimination moved North, many of the Northern civil rights fighters changed their tune. Mr. Abrams is a member of the all-male University Club in New York. While he speaks out against quotas for eradicating racial discrimination he is for upholding quota limitations in a pu-

blic housing project. Mr. Abrams is for quotas that lock minorities out but against quotas that lock them in. He also had trouble with black students when he was president of Brandeis University.

John Buzel admitted to this reporter that he had trouble with both black and Hispanic students when he was president of San Jose College. Representative Minetta reports that Buzel's personality and administration style led to campus and community divisions.

In an article written by John Buzel in the New York Times, he said, "I have expressed opposition to quota-driven affirmative action programs and any form of preference based solely on race. It is a crude simplification - for example, to suggest that racism and discrimination are the root cause of why certain minority groups fall below the average in income and occupation." While discrimination may not be the sole cause for black income and education to fall below the average, it is certainly the root cause. Blacks have been given inferior education facilities and even qualified blacks are discriminated against in the job market. They are victims of declining and denial of government contracts, at this present time. Marion Edelman

reports that a black college graduate has less chance of a job than a white high school graduate, and a black high school graduate has less chance than a white eighth grade graduate.

Buzel continues, "Discrimination has been used as a sponge to absorb and explain everything, thus avoiding examination of many major factors (length and quality of education, family background, attitudes toward work, etc.)." This statement makes John Buzel sound like a person who believes that blacks are innately inferior. Black children and their parents have been victims of inferior, segregated schools and even in desegregated schools the attitude of the officials and faculty members who are heirs of the old racial system. It is only human that these factors have a bearing on education, family income and attitudes towards school and work.

Mr. Buzel attempts to make a comparison between Chinese, Japanese and newer immigrants, such as Cubans, Vietnamese, Koreans and Filipinos. These groups are Johnny-come-latelys who came here of their own volition and they were more accepted by the whites than blacks.



Counterfeiting

It's a \$20 billion business in the United States. It allows Americans to own designer goods at cut rate prices and parts for foreign cars can also be obtained for cut rate prices. The \$20 billion business is in counterfeit or "knock offs." The flood of fake merchandise ranges from personal computer to blue jeans to military helicopter parts.

Knock off is not a new industry, especially in the apparel industry. People will buy fake goods because they "look as good as the real stuff." However, the goods do not contain the quality which upholds certain name brands such as Gucci, Fendi, Lee jeans and Calvin. Recent interviews with U.S. Customs agents, congressional staff investigators and industry executives indicate that copying has reached major proportions in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world.

The counterfeiting of well known products threatens the financial health and reputations of the companies producing the real products. In some cases, such as auto parts, safety becomes the key element dividing counterfeits from the real products.

More than \$20 billion is spent each year on counterfeit products. Of that, \$3 billion is spent on fake auto parts and accessories, and the lost profits reach approximately \$500 million annually. The major problem with counterfeit products is the ideas of copyright or trademark laws will become useless and nothing can be done to deter the counterfeiting.

Cut rate prices are the main attraction for buying knock offs. The prices are as low as half the normal retail cost and sometimes less. Counterfeit home computers have problems with circuit boards overheating and self-destructing in short periods of time. Counterfeiting has also found its way into specialized markets such as heavy equipment, aircraft and medical supplies. Fake parts have been found in military aircraft and some fake fire detectors and controls in Boeing aircraft engines. Fake pumps for helping maintain a patient's heart beat during open heart surgery have been found in many smaller hospitals.

Congress is considering laws to make the manufacture or sale of counterfeit goods a violation of federal law. Presently, corporations can only file civil law suits to stop the production and prevent future sales. Unfortunately, corporations rarely are able to collect from the offenders since most counterfeit goods are produced abroad - far, far out of U.S. reach.

Overseas, it is rampant because labor and materials are substantially cheaper than in the U.S. Even the cost of shipping is cut drastically. Hot items in the U.S. are usually hot items on the counterfeit market. For example, when Calvin Klein jeans were truly hot two years ago, major department stores were selling the jeans for \$36 to \$44. Cut rate, knock off stores were selling the so-called Calvins for \$19.99 and less. The jeans came complete with fake labels and trademark stitching.

The market of fakes is not likely to slow down, due to the fact that a great many Third World nations depend upon this business to build up their trade and commerce. Countries such as Brazil, Mexico and the Philippines, see the market and demand so they cater to it, in hopes of building their economy. These countries seem to understand that Americans are obsessed with name and not so much quality.

The American society has become so involved in name dropping that quality has become secondary. Today's society seems to have replaced having a few and the best with having a lot and poor quality. Americans claim to be superior to other nationalities. However, many other nationalities seem to understand the purpose of doing it right the first time and not having to replace things in short periods of time. Quality does not have to cost a fortune, which again many Americans do not understand. And even if the cost is higher, that just means that replacements need to be done annually.

Steering away from the counterfeit clothing and accessories, the influx of counterfeiting into the medical profession can prove to be fatal. Inferior drugs and equipment may soon become the pawns in malpractice suits. If the federal government does not make a drastic move quickly, millions of lives can be lost due to the inferior products; possibly more rigid and strict rules and regulations should be imposed on medical equipment manufacture and sale and import equipment.

Finally, counterfeiting in car and aircraft parts is the final straw. These parts are death certificates signed by the owners.

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