

Reading The President's Lips

The National Urban League (UL) met last week and in its scholarly fashion documented how bad off black people are.

Blacks have fallen from a "racial parity index" of 51 in 1967 to 47 in 1985, "indicating that African Americans lost ground in the quest for racial parity," said Frank Lomax, the UL's executive vice president. Equality with white people would earn a score of 100.

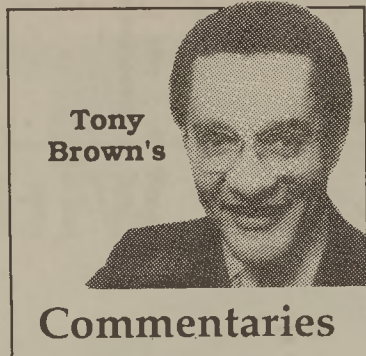
I doubt if the report mentioned the fact that during that same period blacks went from spending 93 percent of their money with non-black people to spending 93.4 percent with non-blacks.

Put another way. Blacks went from spending seven percent with other blacks to spending 6.6 percent with other blacks while the "racial parity index" dropped from 51 to 47.

I'm sure that kind of logic wasn't included and I readily confess that my economic evaluating is in the distinct minority among my people. But also be assured, I'm convinced that I'm correct. Therefore, I have no intention of dropping the subject.

And speaking of points of view, from the accounts I read of the UL's convention, I wonder if the UL-powers-that-be really heard what President George Bush told them?

Unanimously, the UL officials applauded Bush's "tone," with minor reservations. For example, Bush outright ignored the



Tony Brown's

Commentaries

UL plea to nullify recent Supreme Court decisions with legislation and made it clear that he approves of the recent decisions against affirmative action programs and setting aside contracts for so-called "minorities."

It's safe also to conclude that the UL does not believe that blacks can depend on this U.S. Supreme Court to help improve the black misery index. Therefore, it seems appropriate to ask if the UL believes the President will do what the Supreme Court will not.

While the UL is strongly pro-affirmative "action," Bush is adamantly affirmative "opportunity." He finds the issue of affirmative action essentially irrelevant to the current work force and the future economy. In the 1990s, there will be "more than enough jobs and too few people qualified to fill them," he says.

Bush suggested in his UL speech that affirmative action

programs are no longer necessary, because a shortage of labor in the coming decade will mean jobs for women, non-whites and immigrants. Forget quotas, goals, timetables, set-asides and 8-A firms.

Bush may want a "kinder and gentler" nation for blacks, but don't depend on him to build it. Clearly, Bush's plans are to create a full opportunity economy to respond to affirmative racism: education, urban enterprise zones, skills and the training required to complete and succeed in today's complex market.

These ideas were espoused in a 20-minute speech interrupted 11 times by UL applause. "I think the Administration has got its rhetoric right. Now we'll be watching to see how it implements it," John Jacob, the UL's chairman said.

That statement is confusing because President Bush is in lock-step with the very Supreme Court which the UL has decided will not reduce the misery index of blacks with its rulings. "I want to make sure everyone in this room knows just where I stand," Bush initially told the black leaders. But one wonders if they understand what he said.

Read his lips if you don't believe me.

TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL TV series can be seen on public television in Charlotte on Channel 58 (WUNG). Please consult TV listings or phone station for air time.

Child Poverty Shouldn't Happen In U.S.

By Cong. Gus Hawkins
Guest Editorial

The United States is one of the wealthiest and most abundant nations in the world, and is often looked upon by poorer nations to provide their needy with aid packages and technical assistance. Our foreign policy statements are laced with phrases projecting the success of our democratic ideals and principles. The truth is, despite this image as a beacon of hope to other nations, our commitment to helping children in this country, especially black children, isn't all that great. In fact, in some instances, it is down right inferior.

A clear example of this situation is children without homes. Almost 10 percent of black children in America were in foster care in 1980. One-third of this total have been there for over five years. Almost 10 percent of black children are in families

supervised by a child welfare agency, four times the supervision rate for white children.

Black children are subject to greater health risks than their white counterparts. This includes higher percentages in black infant mortality and low birth weight babies. Black children are less likely to be immunized or fully immunized against one or more preventable diseases. Many do not have regular dental checkups, if any at all, before they reach adult age. Between one-fifth and one-third of all black children and youth fall below the average for white hemoglobin level, a red blood cell classification which is one measure of inadequate nutritional status and anemia. Comparable margins of disadvantage are visible in educational achievement, and as the child matures, in employment status.

A recent report "California:

The State Of Our Children - Report Card '89" prepared by Children Now, a nonpartisan group of prominent Californians, examined the status of children in their home state. Graded on a number of factors such as education, health, safety, teen years and family status, the report gave California an overall grade of "D." Nationally, the report card on children is probably close to the California subpar rating. Yet none of these facts are mysterious to many of those faced with making decisions on funding programs at the local, state and federal levels. The American public probably doesn't comprehend the full scope of the crisis facing children, and particularly the plight of black children.

One way the American public can be inspired is for President Bush to raise the issue of child poverty through a nationally televised address.

Unemployment Affects Jail Population

Guest Editorial
By Charles E. Belle

"There is simply no convincing evidence that more incarceration has deterred crime in any way -- either by discouraging new crime or by reducing recidivism," Robert D. Raven, President, American Bar Association.

The recent Reagan appointees as Justices of the Supreme Court are apparently blind to the connection of unemployment to crime. Considering their recent decision to denounce the Civil Rights Act of 1866 by their decision in Patterson vs McLean Credit Union. Under their new ruling, "discrimination or racial harassment after one is hired" is acceptable in these United States. There is no justice served by protecting people from discrimination only during the hiring process, but not protecting them from abusive treatment, harassment or general discrimination once they are in the work place.

The supremacist Supreme Court of Reagan recently also ruled on an employment discrimination case. Wards Cove Packing vs Aronio, shifting the burden of proof of discrimination in hiring onto the plaintiff - the job seeker. When the Justice of the Supreme and State Courts, as well as all European Americans, Americans understand that the

root cause of crime by all ethnic groups, red, yellow, black and white, is unemployment then they can make laws which will truly affect crime. An affirmative action commitment by this nation is necessary to negate the creation of America's rapidly growing criminal arena.

"Our criminal justice system is overwhelmed. Each of the three parts of that system -- the police, the courts and corrections simply cannot handle the increasing number of people falling in the river of crime," according to Robert D. Raven, President, American Bar Association. Mr. Raven was addressing the Commonwealth Club of California, its over 14,000 strong members and a nationwide radio network of over 100 stations on the topic of "Crime, Courts and Correction: A Criminal Justice System Overwhelmed." A senior partner in the law firm of Morrison & Foerster, a model of a private industry affirmative action, Raven reviewed the repugnant record of America's battle against crime.

The country "cannot stand 34 million crimes a year." These are only the reported serious crimes. Most crime is not reported to the police. Even serious crime like robbery, rape and assault is reported only 46% of the time." In 1986, only 2.53 million of the 34 million serious

crimes were even exposed to arrest, less than 10%. "Sanction for crime today is not only uncertain, it is unlikely and slow," reminds Raven. A recent study discloses that in Los Angeles, inmates wait in jail for an average of 32 days; in Chicago's Cook County the average is 144 days. Seven hundred inmates currently in Cook County jail have been waiting trial for over a year. Nationwide there are over 605,000 men and women in federal and state prisons and another 300,000 in county jails. Federal prisons hold almost 50% more prisoners than they planned to hold. "Today, 37 states have prison facilities that are under court order to reduce overcrowding."

No matter how good the intentions of the European Americans, African Americans and others must always be mindful of and guided by the godfather of the Civil Rights struggle from slavery in 1858 and subsequent continuous oppression that the hero of Paul Robeson, Frederick Douglass espoused when he said, "Power concedes nothing without a struggle." Size alone may make the prisons a place to plot "Peaceful coexistence" at the pace this country's criminal element is growing. An affirmation for affirmative action can afford this obvious drug poison in prison.

Americans Have Lost The Incentive To Pinch Pennies---Or To Pick Them Up

"You can't buy anything with a penny!" responded a senior citizen when I asked if she picks up pennies during her walks. Although she admits she does pick up pennies, this lady asked, "What can you buy with a nickel or a quarter?"

This lady forced everyone on the park bench to grapple with her question. I could not think of a single thing one could buy with a penny or a nickel. And no one else in the park dared to challenge her statements.

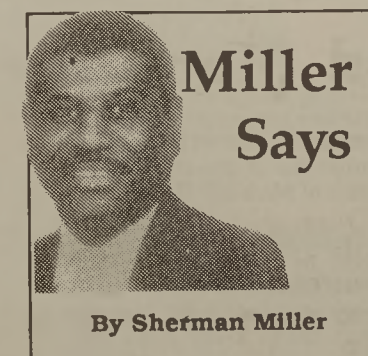
I left the park encountering the many times I had found pennies along my neighborhood walking path. I often times would pick up these pennies, al-

though on occasion I have allowed one to remain in the street two days before I retrieved it.

I asked another senior citizen if he found pennies. He said he found many pennies and he picked all of them up. This fellow claims he walks through the parking lot of his neighborhood shopping mall and finds four or five pennies without any effort.

This fellow also said he finds pennies on the floor of the local supermarket. He offered a couple of experiences that highlighted the insignificance of small change today.

He claimed that a lady's pocketbook popped open in the



Miller Says

By Sherman Miller

parking lot of a supermarket when he was driving up. A few coins rolled out onto the pavement. She merely closed her pocketbook, got into her car,

Letters To The Post

Education Needs Parental Attention

Dear Editor:

To parents of school age children and parents of preschoolers, as a concerned mother, please allow me to share some of my experiences with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system.

My initial contact came in 1974 when the family relocated from another city. Upon my arrival I immediately sought out the proper schools to enroll my first grader and third grader. Within weeks, I was told by my first grader's teacher that my child was idle and was not using her time wisely.

While I agreed that it is my responsibility to encourage my children academically, evaluate their progress, and monitor their study habits, it is difficult if not impossible for me to know what is occurring in the classroom setting. Because teachers now seem to be reluctant to enforce verbal discipline, parents should in-

sist upon teachers challenging academic abilities.

It has been necessary for me to obtain outside help for each of my three children before they demonstrated their true academic abilities. A specific recommendation that I would like to make is the teaching of phonetics on a consistent basis by primary school teachers. It is my opinion that this would prove to be most useful in future learning and will not give young children the impression that elementary schools are an advanced babysitting class.

My second experience was the most disturbing and is an excellent example of underlying problems when there are breakdowns in teacher child communications. During the previous school year I was advised that my third child was causing class disruptions and was put out in the hallway. To

my dismay my son was still expected to know what went on in class that day. What resulted was my third child being diagnosed with a serious reading problem. Fortunately, my involvement has resulted in an appropriate academic placement.

These children will be our leaders tomorrow. Without dedicated parents and teachers making a joint effort and a commitment to our children we will continue to have an accelerating dropout rate. Without the emphasis on phonetics in our schools' reading program, we will contribute to our illiteracy problem. Without a challenging academic environment, we will create children who channel their energies to drugs, crime, and sex. As concerned parents we should be aware of our children's education.

HATTIE CRAWFORD

New Writers Need More Recognition

Dear Editor:

I don't suppose Dannye Romaine could find any contemporary black writers when she went to the grave and dug up Phyllis Wheatly from 1761.

Ironically three local black writers were being honored at the Afro-American Cultural Center on the same date, July 9, 1989, when Ms. Romaine did her article on Wheatly.

I too, like the UNC Charlotte English professor Julian Mason, love Phyllis Wheatly's

poetry.

It will be interesting to find what the professor thinks of the fact that Wheatly was stolen from Africa by one of the prominent forefathers, Ben Franklin. No mention was made of this.

Ms. Romaine is to be congratulated on her ability to placate contemporary local writers via her ingenuity to exchange a prominent, though deceased, black writer for new ones. This says that new black writers get caught in the catch 22 syndrome-- how can

a new black writer get press and publication if they are not famous--then how does one become famous without press and publication?

Ms. Romaine did release press on the autobiography of the three honorees on the opposite page which required a magnifying glass to find.

Well, I suppose a little press is better than no press. Thanks Dannye for small favors.

ORATE AESTHETRY

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Let us hear your comments, ideas and opinions. Write to:

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