

Point of View

Editorial

Depression Is Hardest On Us

Black Americans perceive the debate over whether we are in a depression as an irrelevant exercise in avoiding hard realities. Depression is a harsh and relentless fact of life in the underprivileged areas, and its cold tentacles have begun to ensnare working people and the middle-class, having disposed of the most impoverished.

For many, the abrupt and unprecedented turn of events has encouraged a sense of hopelessness, a feeling that things are going to get much worse before they get better — if indeed they do get better. We do not subscribe to the alarm and defeatism so often encountered today; we are convinced that Las Vegas and the County has the resources and creativity necessary to overcome current problems.

The prophets of defeat and gloom, however, will



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no doubt be proven accurate if the level of local leadership does not rise above its present mediocrity and timidity. And while the black community certainly did not create the problems we are mired in, it has a natural and fundamental leadership role to play in helping to determine how the community is to face the enormous consequences of economic deterioration, and to help formulate an aggressive, thorough-going agenda of change.

This agenda, it should be stressed, would require a considerable break from the thinking of the past. It would be more far-reaching than the limited response from the Great Society...their limited response to pervasive class and racial injustices. More to the point, it would not be a recognizably black program, but would instead embrace all those who need social change or the protection of government against consequences of a mismanaged economy.

Blacks will not move ahead while the rest of the society is in a widespread decline. Our needs will only be served by a rapid and dramatic transformation of a society which results in a new and better social order that meets the needs of all who are in need.



By Kenneth Fitzgerald

"I wonder how she would look in that gown." "I wonder how he would look in that suit." The scene is enacted in an average living room in an average dwelling. It is being played out by average people. Attempting to answer those questions do not always present a major problem — just thirteen out of every one hundred times. It is during those time when the questioners are Black that seeking an answer presents an almost insurmountable problem. That is so because the models, as viewed on television, are invariably white. Even in the showcases, the mannequins are white and there is little or no change in newspaper advertisements.

The viewers, in both of the above cited instances, are placed in a position where they are unable to generate the kinds of mental pictures necessary to deduce very important outcomes. Making a purchase with that kind of lack of data could be quite risky. That is especially so in these times when, out of fear of hurting someone's feelings, the poor victim wears the apparel even

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products, the greater are the chances of that consumer purchasing their product.

Never attempt to sell



FITZGERALD

though it is despised. Nationally produced advertisements and television commercials have made considerable positive changes since 1968. Approximately three of every one hundred models in those are Black. While that might not appear to be much, and it isn't, in 1967 there were none. A similar percentage is true in the printed media. Those changes occurred because Black people, nationally, illustrated their disdain for the existing formulae by avoiding those products and stores which did not afford them an opportunity to earn a living in that very well paid profession — modeling.

On the local level, in Las Vegas, those kinds of changes have been made slower in manifesting themselves. Part of the cause is that a large number of businesses are family owned operations. Most, however, do utilize the services of models. The purpose of that utilization, on both national and local levels, is to persuade the buying public to buy a product. The closer agencies come to enabling the consumer in identifying with their

liquid plumber to a person who doesn't have a sink. Never try to sell a tortoise gown, modeled by Cheryl Ladd, to a man who is shopping for Cicely Tyson even though comedians often joke about selling refrigerators to Eskimos.

Nine months ago, I wrote an editorial concerning advertising policies of local businesses. Today, with the rapid changes which are occurring in the business community, it is necessary to update that editorial.

I wrote of the almost total exclusion of Black people in locally produced advertisements for both television and newspapers. From time to time, national companies do involve Black people in their locally

shown advertisements. Those, however, employ Black models who live in other places. While that is good, it is not yet having the positive kinds of impacts on the desires of local Black people to have that kind of involvement. Resultantly, the needed impact on the local Black economy has not occurred. The use of Black people in National efforts has created new jobs for Black models and they, in turn, serve as role models for young Black children who might aspire to being, as their career choices, high fashion models.

Following a one person letter writing campaign, beginning over a year ago, some changes in local attitudes have occurred with several local businesses and also with those national businesses who also have local branches. Sadly, the bulk of local businesses continue to disassociate themselves from Black consumers. Some are yet convinced that to use Black people in their advertisements, would be suggestive of their catering to Black people. They are apparently unaware of the fact that that is the purpose of advertising.

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SOCIAL PROGRAMS UNDER ATTACK

By Vernon E. Jordan

Federal social programs are under heavy attack. They are widely believed to have failed in their objectives, to be designed to help only blacks, and to cost more than the economy can afford.

All of those beliefs are false.

Federal social programs have worked. Some are among the most successful endeavors of government. Despite an enormous budget the Pentagon



VERNON JORDON

demonstrated it cannot land helicopters in the Iranian desert; but despite pinched funds, social programs have alleviated hunger, improved the education of

the poor, and trained many young people for productive jobs.

The food stamp program is an example of how a federal program can make a direct attack on malnutrition and hunger. Before it was instituted a Congressional investigation found widespread hunger in parts of the country. Recently, a followup study found that thanks to the food stamp program extreme hunger has largely been eliminated.

Sure, the program

isn't cheap. But its rising costs are directly due to the rise in food prices, an inflationary development that makes food stamps even more

necessary for the poorest among us.

Head Start is another success. It got a bad press in its first few years. But a recent study that followed children from Head Start through

young adulthood found they performed better in school, were more interested in going to college, and less likely to get into trouble than

children with similar backgrounds who did not have the benefit of the program.

The lesson of Head Start is that social programs should be seen as investments —

by spending on pre-school education the government saved later and larger expenditures on remedial classes, law enforcement, and training costs.

The Job Corps is another Great Society program that gets little credit. But it is a success — 70 percent of the Corps' graduates land jobs in the private sector and most of the rest go into the military or continue their education. Not bad, since most of their peers are still pounding the

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