

Point of View

Editorial

An assessment of where we are and where we have been in community business enterprises is a timely topic inasmuch as we view considerable turnarounds. What is tomorrow's outlook?

Blacks count in the American consumer economy and every year, more attention is directed toward this area. The "buck" is green and is important regardless of what race or creed handles it.

Success in business is what everyone strives for. However, it is not the whole story. We cannot separate our awareness of how much some of us have achieved, in the face of forbidding odds, from our awareness that most of us are still denied the opportunity of achieving more than grim survival. For every black family whose economic prospects are indisputably improving, three or four others remain locked in a state of poverty from which they have virtually no hope of ever escaping.

Even where we have made significant economic progress, the base for further progress remains dangerously limited.

The door to opportunity and success is open to blacks, we are told. That it is open only a crack, through which only a few can pass, is conveniently overlooked.

In face of this kind of attitude, what can be the meaning of black success? Simply this: it puts us in a better position to help ourselves.

Greater opportunities for economic progress will not automatically follow from the opportunities we have already made for ourselves. They will follow if, deliberately and persistently, we apply to this goal the strength, we have gained as a result of our success to date.

To Be Equal

POVERTY STILL AT RECORD LEVEL

By JOHN E. JACOB

Faced with continuing high levels of poverty the Administration seems to think the best policy is to deny there's a problem.

When the Census Bureau recently released official poverty statistics for 1984, Administration spokesmen pointed to the decline in the poverty rate from the year-earlier figures and said it proved that Washington's policies are working.

But they are not. Yes, there was a decline in the poverty rate. In 1983, 15.3 percent of all Americans were poor; in 1984, it was down to 14.4 percent.

But the 1984 rate is the highest poverty level for a

non-recession year since 1966. And an examination of the statistics reveals that poverty is worse for some groups.

The most tragic aspect of the new shape of poverty, as revealed by the Census statistics, is the increase in



John E. Jacob

poverty among black children.

An absolute majority — 51.1 percent — of all black children are poor. That's the highest level since the government started collecting such figures back in 1970.

An analysis of the Census data by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities also reveals widening gaps

and job creation and the poverty rate declined only by one percentage point — hardly enough to start crowing about a victory in the war on poverty.

By the end of one of the strongest growth years in recent times, almost 34 million people were still poor and more than eight million were officially unemployed.

At that rate it would take years of growth on the scale

John E. Jacob is President Of The National Urban League

between black and white families, and between the poor and the affluent.

The typical white family's income rose in 1984 but there was virtually no change in median black family income. Between 1980 and 1984, median white family income rose by about \$75 after adjusting for inflation. But black median family income declined by \$580.

That means the black-white gap is widening, and black families that had less to begin with are losing ground.

The Center found a similar pattern in the widening gap between the affluent and the poor. The poorest 40 percent of American families got only 15.7 percent of national income; the top 40 percent got 67.3 percent.

Those figures show that the poorest families got lower portions of the nation's income while the most affluent got their highest share since the Census Bureau started collecting that information back in 1947.

The Administration believes that poverty can be ended without government help. All that needs to be done is to have a vigorous private sector adding new job opportunities.

Sure, that can help. But 1984 was just such a year of vigorous economic growth

growth and many predict a recession by next year. That would mean a sharp jump in the poverty figures, perhaps to new highs.

So there's no joy in the new poverty figures. They show a widening gap between the races and between the highest and lowest income categories.

They tell us that poverty is becoming a serious disease of childhood, with children and women most vulnerable.

They tell us that short-term economic recovery has little impact on the overwhelming majority of the poor and that current policies have failed.

And they tell us that in the absence of a concerted attempt by the government to create full employment and equalize opportunities, poverty will remain a growing social and economic problem, endangering our nation and its ideals.

The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice welcomes expressions of all views from readers. Letters should be kept as brief as possible and are subject to condensation. They must include signature, valid mailing address and telephone number, if any. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Because of the volume of mail received, unpublished individual letters cannot be acknowledged. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice, 1201 S. Eastern Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89104.

Target: BLACK AMERICA

By Julian Bond

For most voters in Atlanta, the outcome was a forgone conclusion: Mayor Andrew Young's opponents included a man who said he was "God's candidate" and a nightclub comedian who was disqualified after admitting he had last voted in 1952.

But one group of candidates — 16 blacks and one white running for city

council and the board of education — brought something new to a city that thought it had seen everything.

The 17, mostly elderly retirees or laborers, were recruited by a shadowy group called the National Democratic Policy Committee. The committee is the political arm of Lyndon LaRouche, the three-time

presidential candidate who runs a collection of right-wing groups from a \$2.3 million armed estate in Virginia, just 45 minutes from the White House.

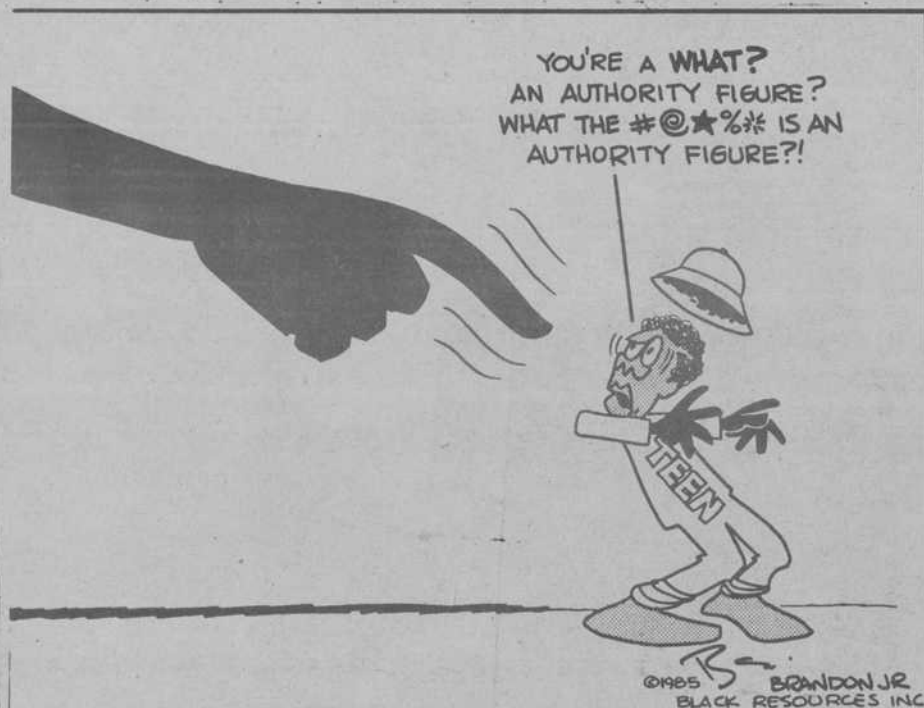
LaRouche's followers have disrupted press conferences by President Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, LaRouche himself has called Walter Mondale a KGB agent, and believes that certain

Jewish banking families control Great Britain and are running an international drug-smuggling ring through the International Monetary Fund.

The Atlanta candidates signal a new venture for LaRouche: an attempt to infiltrate black America. For those who know him and his politics, that's a frightening prospect.

LaRouche has historic ties to the American Nazi Party and the Ku Klux Klan and has received money from South Africa to spy on anti-apartheid groups here. He has called black people "bestial" and his publications carry a steady stream of vilification against black leaders, including Andrew Young and Jesse Jackson.

Although groups monitoring LaRouche estimate he has no more than 400 followers nationwide, his influence is far greater. In 1984, his National Democratic Policy Council recruited over 2,000 candidates in state and local elections; LaRouche himself spent \$6 million and received 79,000 votes as an "independent" Democrat in



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