

Point of View

Editorial

The year 1985 has come and gone, and many of us have very little to look forward to. The economy is still slow, the unemployment rate is climbing, violence is erupting in a few of our major cities, racism and its concomitant ramifications still exist. All of this is happening amidst promises of better times ahead.

The question that is uppermost in our minds is when can we expect better times? It appears that if anything can be done to ease the existing problems in our great nation, that time is now.

What can we as Blacks expect in the times ahead?

We see the national budget deficit climbing even though there were promises of balancing the national budget.

We also see a greater possibility of reduced services this year than in the past. The increase in taxes could be inevitable unless some dramatic changes take place in the very near future.

We see more and more Blacks losing their jobs in a city with only one or two major industries as its backbone for employment.

Skepticism is everywhere. No one seems to trust anyone anymore. People are losing their jobs, their homes, and their possessions for which they have worked long and hard.

Those of us who have jobs have been asked to help those who don't. The overriding question here is how can we help others when we are barely getting by ourselves? With the price of food, clothing, gasoline, housing, utilities, etc., at their present level it is difficult for the working people to make ends meet, therefore rendering it virtually impossible to help someone else.

Take heart. The present state and federal leaders have promised better times ahead. We're waiting. Somewhat impatiently, but we're waiting.

"...Today the race is up, tomorrow it has fallen; today the Negro seems to be the footstool of the other races and nations of the world; tomorrow the Negro may occupy the highest rung of the great human ladder."

Marcus Garvey

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To Be Equal

THE STATE OF BLACK AMERICA

By John E. Jacob

Last month the National Urban League released its annual State of Black America Report, a document that accurately describes a black America excluded from the economic boom, excluded from full participation in job growth, and in danger of being excluded from tomorrow's economic mainstream, as well.

The blunt fact is that blacks never make up for the ground they lose in recessions. So while the rest of America is wondering how much longer this mature economic boom will last, blacks are wondering whether we will ever get back to where we were before the last recession.

Last year poverty rates declined slightly — but black poverty is higher than it was just five years ago, and a majority of black children are growing up poor.

Last year unemployment declined — but black unemployment is still around fifteen percent. If whites had such a high unemployment rate it would be called a Depression.

Last year, the nation's family income rose — but black Americans have



John E. Jacob

suffered a real decline in income over the past several years and the black-white income gap is growing.

What kind of an economic boom is it when black families are devastated by

poverty and unemployment, when a couple of million people sleep in the streets because they are homeless, when studies find a rise in hunger?

The facts about the deteriorating black condition cannot be disputed.

Nor can the determination of the black community to mass its energies to deal directly with the problems afflicting our communities.

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In virtually every community in the country, black citizens are working to fight crime and drugs, to assist the black poor, to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy, to make our schools better.

But if you tune in the news or read a daily paper, you are likely to hear about how blacks need to do more to help themselves.

And if you listen to government or to conservative spokesmen, that's all that is necessary. But it is hard to imagine that the enormous problems faced by America's dispossessed can be solved without government policies that relieve poverty and create opportunities.

Such key issues facing black and urban communities such as crime,

education and teenage pregnancy relate directly to the creation of job and training opportunities that enable people to earn a living and take on family responsibilities.

Black America's problems can't be solved solely by government or by community self-help efforts. But they will be solved by a combination of the two.

The black community has no illusions about that, and it helps explain why those who work with alienated youth and troubled families are also demanding a national policy to create jobs and assure quality education for all.

The federal withdrawal from programs that develop human capital has helped to increase poverty while damaging the productivity of the economy. National policies geared to meeting the human and economic needs of the nation are needed.

As the State of Black America Report recommends, a National Youth Employment Program with strong education, training and work components, and a Universal Training and Employment System that guarantees skills and opportunities for all, are essential to making the state of both black and white America healthy again.

trained to be professional home economists.

Finally, a North Carolina program is tackling another crucial career-related issue for many women: child care.

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CHILD WATCH

By Marian Wright Edelman

Better Opportunities For Women

Women in this country are still earning far less than men — roughly two thirds of every dollar a man takes home. In a time when more and more women are raising families alone, this income gap is helping to push many women and their children into poverty.

But around the country, a growing number of community projects are now trying to fight this trend by opening up new career opportunities for women. In December 1985, the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education gave awards to five states which have developed innovative programs designed to help teen mothers, homemakers entering the job market, and minority or disadvantaged women prepare to compete in the world of work.

Starting in January of 1986,

the Florence Crittenton Home in Charleston, South Carolina will open a day program to help pregnant teens become self-sufficient adults. The young women enrolled in the program will receive job preparation in an accredited vocational education program, while also receiving the information on health care, health education (including classes in childbirth techniques), human sexuality and parenthood that they will need to start a family.

In New Jersey, Project Access is helping prepare disadvantaged minority women for a range of careers, with emphasis on the promising high technology field. At Bergen County Adult Vocational Technical School, the women receive the counseling and training they need to

compete for jobs in computer operations, automotive technology, electromechanics and other technical fields.

In Buffalo, New York, the Everywoman's Opportunity Center is helping a range of women in transition — from the middle-aged widow seeking a job for the first time to the teen mother — to learn the skills and find the self-confidence they need to succeed. In addition to providing free tuition and books for vocational education courses, the women gain access to a support network, counseling, and a "job club" to keep them abreast of local job opportunities in everything from plumbing to word processing.

An unusual teacher training program at Keene State College in New Hampshire turns the tables on traditional male/female careers. Women from typically female occupations are retrained to be industrial arts teachers, while men are

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