

Point of View

Editorial

DO ALL BLACKS THINK ALIKE?

Deroy Murdock

Debate among members of other ethnic groups is utterly routine. The majority of Irishmen voted for Ronald Reagan for President, yet no one accuses Rep. Tip O'Neill, leader of the loyal opposition in Congress, of "selling out" the Irish. Governor Mario Cuomo serves the people of New York with a set of beliefs which conflict with those of the state's Republican senator, Alphonse D'Amato. Will the real Italian please stand up? Neoconservative Irving Kristol and New York Mayor Ed Koch can disagree without anyone questioning either's Jewish credentials.

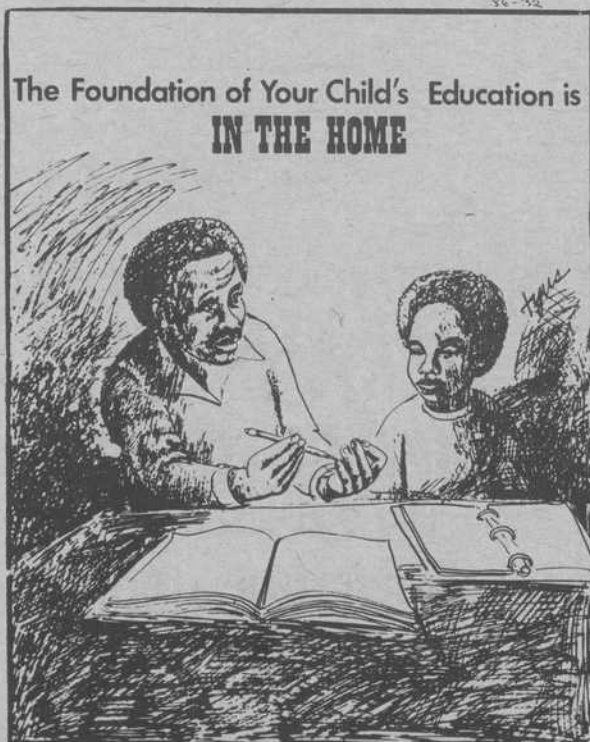
Just as this diversity of "white opinion" raises no eyebrows, the disagreements of other minority groups are starting to look run-of-the-mill. For instance, while long-time Democrat Cesar Chavez organizes California farm workers, former White House aide Linda Chavez is seeking the Maryland Republican Senate nomination. Her move has been hailed as a milestone in Hispanic progress and not denounced as a cynical betrayal of all Mr. Chavez ever stood for.

Why then is political pluralism, one of America's greatest strengths, so strongly discouraged in the black community? Many blacks and whites seem to feel there is only one "black" point of view to which all blacks must subscribe. But given blacks' diversity of values, backgrounds, and ambitions, the expectation that blacks will hold one set of beliefs is as ludicrous as the idea of unanimous "white" opinion on any matter.

There is a frightening premise underlying this thinking: that blacks are not yet sufficiently sophisticated to disagree with each other, or that the rank-and-file is not equipped to choose between the differing opinions advocated by blacks of various political complexions.

The need for debate among blacks has never been greater. While some 55 percent of black infants are born out of wedlock, and the number one cause of death among black males, ages 18 to 25, is murder, blacks cannot accept the notion that the formulas prescribed by black leaders are either effective or desirable. With these and other grim realities facing blacks in the United States, it is time to examine alternative proposals to the status quo.

It is time for black America to shed itself of monolithic thinking and take up the internal debate which has witnessed the success of Irishmen, Italians, Jews, and others who emigrated to this land. If black progress is to come from within, we must have the courage to discuss new views — and listen to new voices.



The Foundation of Your Child's Education is
IN THE HOME

To Be Equal

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION WINS

By JOHN E. JACOB

The Supreme Court's affirmative decisions in early July were an important vindication of a key civil rights program and a firm rejection of the Administration's attempt to destroy it.

The Court has finally pieced together a block of decisions that outline the legal boundaries of affirmative action plans — and in a way that supports their continued usefulness and stops the Justice Department's attempts to roll them back. And the Court did it with decisive 6-3 margins, indicating that its decisions were not to be overturned in the near future.

The limits of affirmative action programs have been fuzzy because the Court built the judicial edifice on a case-by-case basis.

Back in 1979, it ruled, in the Weber case, that private employers could run training

programs with reserved places for blacks in order to redress black underrepresentation in the work force. That left court-imposed decrees and governmental affirmative action programs



John E. Jacob

unresolved.

In 1984, the Court's ruling in the Memphis firefighters case said that whites with seniority could not be laid off before blacks hired under affirmative action programs. The Justice Department grabbed that limited decision

and tried to extend it to undermine local government affirmative action programs, threatening cities with lawsuits.

Now, in two cases from Cleveland and New York, the Court forced the Justice Department to call off its dogs. In the Cleveland case it affirmed preferential hiring or

Justice Brennan's opinion in the New York case rightly points out that invisible barriers remain, for example: "an employer's reputation for discrimination may discourage minorities from seeking employment."

Affirmative action is therefore, an essential remedy that needs to be

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promotion of minorities. And in the New York case it approved a lower court decree ordering a union to meet goals and timetables, along with the right of courts to order racial preferences to redress past discrimination.

The Court made mincemeat out of the Justice Department's arguments in both cases. And it slaughtered the proposition that it is enough to say "we no longer discriminate."

applied even where formal discrimination no longer exists.

That's a point lost on the Administration, which believes that discrimination is dead and that we are a color-blind society, despite countless daily instances of discriminatory barriers that operate to close off opportunities for minorities.

The big question now is: where do we go from here?

Step one should be the Administration's acceptance of the Court's decisions. It should abandon efforts to revoke federal executive orders mandating affirmative action programs among government contractors and end its efforts to tie up the courts with its cramped, rejected view of the issue.

Step two must be Administration compliance with the law by enforcing civil rights statutes, prodding reluctant employers into implementing affirmative action plans, and supporting minorities when they resort to the courts to uphold their rights.

And step three should be to muzzle its propaganda against affirmative action and racial justice. The Justice Department's position has been totally discredited, and its reputation severely tarnished because of its die-hard stance.

The Court's rulings give a clear signal that America's industries and governments can — and should — implement affirmative action programs.

CHILD WATCH

By Marian Wright Edelman

President

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Every Child Deserves A Head Start

A youngster who is three-, four or five-years-old is a very special age. He or she is growing rapidly, developing mentally, and absorbing all the sights, people, and things around him or her.

This period is crucial for helping a child become the best he/she can be. Stimulating surroundings and varied activities can help build the skills and

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confidence necessary for a child to make the most of learning in elementary school and beyond. No wonder enrollment of three- and four-year-olds in early childhood programs nearly doubled from 1970 to 1983.

Head Start is the early childhood program that helps disadvantaged youngsters to improve their lives. It helps children by feeding them, taking care of their health, helping them learn how to think and communicate, and giving them a chance to interact with other children. It also helps their parents by involving them in their children's development.

Study after study of this

twenty-year-old program shows that Head Start works. Children who have been in the program are less likely to be held back a grade or assigned to a special education class than similar children who do not attend the program. Four out of five of Head Start children's parents do volunteer work with the program.

These results have won broad political support for Head Start. Last year, a congressional study cited the program's effectiveness, and leaders of both parties toasted Head Start at a 20th anniversary celebration in Washington.

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