

Point of View

The Final Solution: Don't Think Black

By Tony Brown

A phone call one day from a black college graduate in Kansas and a letter two days later from a black college student at Xavier University in New Orleans provided a remarkable snapshot of the future of black people in this country.

The future of black people, of course, depends on black people and what they do or do not do. Moreover, the future can always be predicted on the basis of present behavior, which is determined by present attitudes.

The attitude of the black woman in Kansas who repeatedly referred to blacks as "minorities," was despondent because she had been accepted to a prominent white medical school in the Midwest with a full scholarship. Her problem: she had not been accepted to the "right" white medical school.

She won't even consider a medical school at a black university. After a barrage of "advice" from counselors, friends and black doctors (many of whom went to black medical schools), she categorically wants nothing to do with black medical schools. In effect, she has been mentally separated from the black community and, therefore, a liability to black peoples' futures.

The letter I referred to came from Heidi Lovett, president-elect of the Student Government Association (SGA) at Xavier University in New Orleans, a black school known for the high caliber of its liberal arts program and the extremely high percentage of its graduates who are accepted and get degrees in pharmacy.

"I just finished reading your comments ('Black College Day This Year is Ace-in-the-Hole') in *The Louisiana Weekly*. As I was reading it, I began to burn inside," the Xavier sophomore wrote.

My column explained the final solution by the courts, civil rights (so-called) lawyers and Governor Buddy

Roemer of Louisiana that will reduce the two black Louisiana universities, Grambling and Southern, to schools for elitist whites.

My response to this neo-racist campaign is to hold the 10th anniversary march and rally for Black College Day (Sept. 24) in Baton Rouge, the state capitol and the home of Southern University. My column called for help (1501 Broadway, Suite



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2014, New York, NY 10036, 212/575-0876) from anyone who wants to save the public black colleges.

But, just as I learned in 1980 many black college alumni and traditional black leaders are, during this stage of their lives, "integration leaders" or they simply don't care if we lose the schools that graduate seven out of 10 black students. Many of these middle-class blacks, in the face of the overwhelming fact that only black colleges can be depended on for a pool of college graduates, still prefer that our energies go to sending black students to white schools where seven out of 10 of them flunk out and 100 percent of them are racially isolated.

"Embarrassing," the Louisiana NAACP president called Southern's and Grambling's resistance to the racist legal attack. "It's separate-but-equal all over again," Ms. Rupert Richards is quoted as saying in *U.S. News & World Report* (April 23, 1990) magazine.

"I also doubt seriously if Rupert Richardson is reflecting

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United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

BY Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Deadly Deceit: U.S. Hides Information

African Americans, in fact all Americans, should question why the United States government has not revealed to the public critical information concerning increased deaths in America directly as a result of exposure to "low-level" nuclear radiation. It is no secret that so-called "high-level" nuclear radiation from atomic bombs and other nuclear weapons is extremely deadly. But what most Americans do not realize is that nuclear power plants and weapons facilities in the United States have emitted "low-level" radiation that has caused the deaths of many Americans.

We all have heard some of the horrors of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Soviet Union several years ago. We have heard that a number of people died in the Soviet Union as a result of that catastrophe.

But what we have not heard before now is that there have been many people who have died here in the United States as a result of operational and accidental emissions of "low-level" nuclear radiation from plants such as the U.S. Government's Savannah River nuclear weapons facility in South Carolina. Thanks to the efforts of Ben Goldman and Dr. Jay Gould of the New York based Radiation and Public Health Project, a project sponsored by the Commission for Racial Justice, a new book on this subject has just been published. The name of the book is **DEADLY DECEIT: LOW-LEVEL RADIATION, HIGH-LEVEL COVER-UP.**

Among the findings of the research of the Radiation and Public Health Project are the following shocking facts:

- After 18 years of official concealment of two nuclear rod meltdowns at the U.S. Government's Savannah River nuclear weapons facility, a review of official mortality statistics revealed more than 10,000 excess deaths in South Carolina and

possibly 100,000 in the Southeast as a whole in the years following the accidents in 1970.

- Fallout from the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident may have accelerated the deaths of some 40,000 Americans with vulnerable immune systems during the summer of 1986.

- Nine million excess deaths in the U.S. may be attributable to the ingestion of fission products from bomb tests and nuclear reactors since the post-war period.

- U.S. government publications systematically covered-up increased death rates after reactor accidents.

- Death rates in areas surrounding the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor diverged significantly from national norms during the five years after the accident in 1979. Examination of computerized government files shows significant impacts on deaths from child cancers, birth defects, other infant diseases, and other causes centered in the ten counties surrounding the reactor.

- Infant death rates in the nation's capitol appear to be associated with radioactive releases from the Peachbottom, Pennsylvania reactor station close to dairy farms supplying milk consumed in the Washington, D.C. area. Findings indicate that poverty and poor diets enhance the ability of radiation to induce low birth weights and prematurity.

Yes, these conclusions are alarming. Some governments in Eastern Europe are now admitting to some of their sins in the past. It is our hope, with the public being made aware of the findings now revealed in **DEADLY DECEIT: LOW-LEVEL RADIATION, HIGH-LEVEL COVER-UP, THAT THE** United States government will also be more open in confessing dangers of nuclear radiation in this nation.

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To Be Equal

CAN EDUCATION CLOSE THE GAP?

By John E. Jacob

I spend a lot of time preaching the virtues of education. I've called for reforms that reach inner city schools as well as suburban ones. My organization runs community based programs that have improved the school performance of African American youngsters.

And I constantly urge employers to support school



John E. Jacob

reform, since their company's futures depend on whether minority children get the skills and training to be productive.

I know I'm right to emphasize the education route to parity -- African Americans with a college degree earn more and have lower unemployment rates than those who never went beyond high school. And high school graduates, in turn, do a lot better than dropouts.

True, but education is no panacea. Equal educational outcomes don't guarantee equal economic results.

Discrimination is a continuing major factor in explaining racial economic differences. How else can we explain the black-white unemployment gap that holds for all education levels?

African American college graduates, for example, have an unemployment rate of only 3.3 percent.

That's well below the national average, but white college graduates have an unemployment rate of only 1.5 percent-- so the black unemployment rate is more than double that for whites with similar high educational achievement levels.

African American school

dropouts had an unemployment rate of 15.7 percent, compared to 8.3 percent for white dropouts.

So unemployment rates among black dropouts are actually less than double that for white dropouts -- proportionately a better ratio than the college-educated blacks'.

The same racial gap exists in income. African American college graduates typically have a household income that's only about 72 percent that for similarly educated whites. But black dropouts' earnings were 85 percent of

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white dropouts' earnings.

Again, the more education, the wider the black-white gap.

It even holds true for poverty rates: African American families headed by a person with one or more years of college are nearly four times as likely to be poor, compared with similar white families.

There are plenty of reasonable explanations to account for some of the gap -- differences in occupations, years of experience, region of employment, age, and so forth.

But taken together, those differences only account for part of the gap. The rest has to be ascribed to discrimination.

That certainly doesn't argue against the value of education -- if anything, the disparities in unemployment and income within the African American community argue overwhelmingly for the positive effects of higher educational attainment.

But it does suggest that we can't ignore the discrimination that pervades this society and just hope it will go away.

I expect those gaps to close, because tight work-force conditions and the shortage of white males will

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