

Point of View

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CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

UNEQUAL PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Thanks to The National Law Journal in its September 21, 1992 edition, further light has been exposed to the deliberate practice of racial discrimination in the enforcement of environmental laws in the United States. The publication concluded, "there is a racial divide in the way the U.S. government cleans up toxic waste sites and punishes polluters.

White communities see faster action, better results and stiffer penalties than communities where blacks, Hispanics and

other minorities live."

Once again environmental racism has been statistically verified. Yet, still in the suites of the White House, Bush and Quayle still deny that racism permeates federal enforcement policies. The National Law Journal is the most widely read legal newspaper in the nation. The impact of this latest study should finally remove all doubt in the minds of those who believe that people of color have made false accusations at federal and state officials.

The following are some of

the key findings of the Law Journal report. "Penalties under hazardous waste laws at sites having the greatest white population were about 500 percent higher than penalties at sites with the greatest minority population, averaging \$335,566 for the white areas, compared to \$55,318 for minority areas." In other words, non-white communities are viewed as being of less worth in terms of enforcement penalties.

"The disparity under the toxic waste law occurs by race alone, not income." This finding proves

that it is racism and not poverty that consigns millions of people of color to the life and death horrors of toxic degradation. For African Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans the reality of racial discrimination is nothing new. It is, however, important to challenge all forms of racism no matter how pervasive or disguised they may appear.

"For all the federal environmental laws aimed at protecting citizens from air, water and waste pollution, penalties in white

communities were 46 percent higher than in minority communities." The result of this kind of unequal protection under the law contributes to the steady rise of the cancer, infant mortality, respiratory disease, and chronic illness rates of people of color communities.

"Under the giant Superfund cleanup program, abandoned hazardous waste sites in minority areas take 20 percent longer to be placed on the national priority action list than those in white areas." And even after people of color communities get placed on the clean-up list, many of these communities are never properly cleaned and cleared of contamination.

Lastly, The National Law Journal found that "in more than half of the 10 autonomous regions that administer Environmental Protection Agency programs around the country, action on cleanup at Superfund sites begins from 12 percent to 42 percent later at minority sites than at white sites."

All of this really means that

TO BE EQUAL

TIME FOR A NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS.

BY John E. Jacob

National Service may be an idea whose time has come.

Americans are beginning to realize that we can't continue to throw away the talents and the future of millions of our young

people.

There is growing support for establishing a nationwide corps of young volunteers to perform public service functions. Such a National Youth Serviced Corps (See *To Be Equal*, Page 3)



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the Bush Administration has been found guilty of racial discrimination in the unequal and unjust enforcement of federal environmental laws. The public health pain and misery experienced in many people of color communities is a direct result of environmental racism and this must be ended now.

Yet we know from the history of freedom movement that injustices perpetrated on innocent people will only be halted when there is an organized and sustained outcry and struggle. For the sake of unborn generations and for the sake of our children of today, the madness of environmental racism must be effectively confronted. The problem does not need more debate. Stop the poisoning of our communities! Clean out the White House!



LOOKING AT L.A. STEPPING DOWN, WHILE MOVING UP

The Big Picture. If we all could see the big picture, most of our problems would be solved. Its sort of like the point guard that has the ability to see the entire basketball court at one time. You can bet that he or she will always make the team, because only a few players have the gift to constantly see the big picture. Even in a strange land Kunta Kinte carried the torch for freedom because he understood the big picture. He knew that others would follow him like Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, Marcus Garvey, Carter G. Woodson, Mandela, King, Malcolm, and countless others. People who understood that the real victory is not for self, but rather for generations yet unborn. The big picture.

Five consecutive times the voters of the second largest city in America went to the polls and elected Tom Bradley. Last week after 20 years of public service in the capacity of mayor, Bradley stepped

down citing that "after 20 years the people deserved new leadership and a fresh direction." As Bradley gave his profound speech announcing his decision not to seek another term as mayor, it was clear throughout it that the mayor is a statesman who understands struggle and there comes a time that true men realize that stepping down really moves the people up to new levels. The big picture.

Just as Kunta Kinte knew that he would never see all of the change himself, but he knew some things are bigger than him.

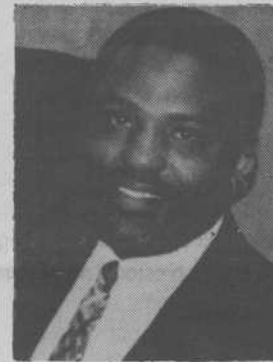
Our political agenda must keep as a top priority, efforts to include more of us and move more of us up and through the ranks - the big picture. Martin Luther King said it best when he proclaimed, "A man has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." Tom Bradley shows that he is a political mind with vision and understands the "people agenda."

Looking Back at Compton
It was too bad that last week's "Its Just Like Compton" was misunderstood by one of our readers who took offense to the focus on Compton.

The gentleman, a former Compton resident, thought that it was a put-down to his former city, not realizing that it was really directed toward bad police tactics. It was much more obvious that the gentleman has not heard the pop song entitled "Its Just Like Compton" for which "Political Points" was patterned after. I'm sorry brother, but just like the song, my column last week was to denounce the stereotypes of cities like Compton, and show that certain problems are not limited to one group but rather problems of America.

The Big Picture! Maybe we should watch and listen a little closer to what the youth are saying and we might understand the big picture when we see it.

Looking At The Sun
The Las Vegas Sun should be commended for it Sept. 28th "Opinion" on the renovation of



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

the Moulin Rouge. The Sun was correct in questioning the need to spend \$200,000 to study the obvious.

The city should move with the same vigor and trust as it did with the Main Street Station "project." Thanks Las Vegas Sun for revealing the big picture.

Back In New York

Police officers that used racial slurs against New York Mayor David Dinkins last week may now be fined. Currently 87 of the officers have been identified as participants in a mob that blocked traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge and ran up the steps of city hall. The group was organized by the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association to protest the mayors proposed civilian review board. Too bad it didn't happen in Nevada, they could have been charged under our new "gang law."

Remember we're not only up from slavery, but we're also down from the pyramids. Remember the big picture.

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Betty Brown, President & Publisher
Lee Brown, General Manager / Editor
Ramon Savoy, Advertising & Marketing Dir.
Lourdes Cordero-Brown, Office Mgr.
William G. Ramirez, Assistant to the Editor
Willis Brown, Production
Ulysses Pairose, Distribution
Don Snook, Graphics

Contributing Writers:
Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams
Ray E. Willis (CCSD)
Rev. Jesse Scott (NAACP)
James S. Tate, Jr., M.D. (NAARPR)
R. K. Brown
Gwen Walker
Kimberly Bailey

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