

Point of View

The views on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one depicted as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

THE BELL CURVE CONTROVERSY

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

As a developmental psychologist and as an African American woman, I have listened with interest to the controversy over the assertion that there are racially-based differences in I.Q.

The I.Q. test is a societal instrument designed to measure a thing society calls intelligence; as such, it seems to be reasonably accurate. In point of brutal fact, I.Q. correlates rather well with achievement: Attorneys and engineers, bankers and biochemists, physicians and CEOs (the overwhelming majority of whom are white) tend to score high on intelligence tests. Supermarket cashiers, fast food restaurant workers, janitors, hospital orderlies and domestics (occupations in which Black people are significantly "over-represented") are likely to have lower intelligence quotients. Most people, no matter what their I.Q., know that

Yet *The Bell Curve* by Charles Murray and the late Richard J. Herrnstein, which only asserts what is common knowledge, has predictably touched off a hue and cry in liberal journalistic and social scientific circles. Jim Holt ("Anti-Social Science," *New York Times*, October 19) tries to explain this fact of American life without really admitting it. "How then do we account for the sizeable gap in measured I.Q. (some 15 points on average) that seems to separate American blacks and whites?" he asks, suggesting that "such differences (can) be made to shrink and ultimately disappear with a better understanding of how the early environment determines the formation of our cognitive apparatus."

This is an excellent example, in my opinion, of the kind of profoundly flawed reasoning that has contributed to stunting the

intellectual and moral development of huge numbers of people - many of them African American. For example, the liberals' obsession with "how the early environment determines the formation of our cognitive apparatus" has led to a massive investment in Head Start programs and other early child development initiatives. While I have supported and continue to support Head Start and related programs, in my opinion, the issue of what and how children learn in these settings has been insufficiently engaged.

Whatever the intentions or motives of those who engage in Mr. Holt's kind of reasoning, it is profoundly self-serving in that it fails to address what I think is the serious question, which is neither "Are Black people less intelligent than white people?" nor "Why are Black people less intelligent than white people?"

Rather, the issue is this: If

white folks - be they of the Jim Holt or Charles Murray variety - are so smart, why can't they do anything about all the not-very-smart Black folks? How has it come to pass that the high I.Q. people - the ones who own substantial portions of the economy, run our government and make the social policy decisions - have created a situation in which so many people of color live in poverty and squalor, destroying themselves with drugs and alcohol, abusing their children and engaging in murderous violence toward one another? Why haven't programs like Head Start been an effective intervention into these people? What factors have caused the smartest people in America to bring the development of our economy to a grinding halt, and to create a social and cultural environment that is anti-developmental in every way?

How are we to understand this apparent anomaly which is that the high I.Q. types haven't figured out how to solve our vast social ills? A crucial factor is that those who influence and determine social policy are guided by an anachronistic model of learning and development which is not only non-development but anti-developmental. This no-growth model informs all our institutions and social programs, from Head Start to public education to prison



DR. LENORA FULANI and drug rehabilitation; from the silver spoon kindergarten to Harvard to Wall Street.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITOR:

I read in the Review Journal that Betty Brown passed away on Thursday, January 12, 1995.

I would like to tell the people who read this paper that this was a "Lady's Lady." She was the closest thing to one's own mother than anyone I have ever met.

To call her a sweetheart is not enough - she was a sweetheart to everyone that came in touch with her.

Verl Thyfault

Dear Editor:

To the African American Community:

Recently Sears eliminated or reduced its advertising schedule with most if not all Black newspapers effective immediately. The reason given was:

"We are expanding our media focus to determine the effectiveness of a variety of media including African American newspapers, magazines, special events and community relations."

The reason given by Sears

for cutting all advertising with us in 1995 was that "Sears has taken this necessary step to help build a better and more comprehensive marketing strategy that will result in an expanded use of African American media."

We, the African American newspaper publishers, believe that Sears has cut out media as a means of reaching you the Black consumer with their own advertising dollars. We should collectively show Sears how effective we can be across the nation in eliminating Sears as one of the stores in which we spend billions of dollars annually.

We call upon you, your families, friends, and neighbors not to shop with Sears since they no longer need or appreciate our purchasing power as American consumers. We must accept no compromise in this exercise of our SILVER RIGHTS

Sponsored by:

Association of African Newspaper Publishers

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

YELLOW LIGHT ON THE INFORMATION SUPER HWY

By Bernice Powell Jackson

There's a lot of talk these days about the information superhighway but not much of the talk includes people of color or poor people. If we aren't careful we and future generations of our children will be left behind in the technology revolutions which are changing the very nature of our existence.

While 98 percent of all American households have television sets, only 11 percent with incomes under \$20,000 have personal computers (65 percent of households with incomes over \$100,000 have computers).

And while 99 percent of schools have at least one computer, 80 percent of those computers are obsolete. Half as many elementary teachers in poor or majority African American school districts are found to be experts in using instructional software. Meanwhile, affluent parents are supplementing the information technology education their children receive at school, while poor parents cannot afford to do

this. Thus, there is a growing gap between the haves and have nots when it comes to this education.

All of this means that our children are being left behind as our economy changes from an industrial-based one to an information-based one. Vast changes in the job market have been occurring over the past two decades as we see fewer unskilled labor jobs. Good-paying jobs in the steel and automobile industries provided the backbone for the African American communities in the North and Midwest from the days of the Great Migration. But these jobs are becoming scarce and pay and benefits are not as dependable as they once were.

Instead, today nearly half of U.S. workers use computers on the job and 60 percent of new jobs in the year 2000 will require computer skills. If children of color and poor children in this country are not being prepared to enter this new job market, they most surely will enter the vast so-called underclass and be resigned to fast food and

other low-paying jobs.

In the state of Ohio, a recent landmark settlement was reached between the Ohio Public Utilities Commission and Ameritech Ohio. This settlement, instituted by a complaint by the Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition in Dayton, provides for the funding of 14 community computer centers in low income neighborhoods. This is a small but important breakthrough in making the national information superhighway accessible to people of all incomes.

Importantly, the settlement also provides for the creation of an \$18 million fund to allow schools to purchase computer network equipment and services over the next six years. Low income school districts will receive priority access to these funds.

Education and job preparation issues are just one kind of concern regarding the information superhighway for our communities. Even those businesspersons of color who are prepared and do want to be a part of the new technology are

being excluded from the marketplace. Entrepreneurs of color account for less than half of one percent of the telecommunications industry revenue. Only 11 such firms have been identified that offer cellular, mobile radio, radio paging or messaging services.

The Clinton administration, particularly Vice President Gore, has shown interest in ensuring that the information superhighway of the future includes all Americans. Its up to us - to individual citizens, to educators, to community activists and leaders - to make sure that the government and the telecommunications industry include our community. It's up to us to press our school districts, to write our Congressional representatives, to pressure public utilities commissions and even institute suits when necessary to provide for our children. There will be additional legislation and guidelines passed in Washington during 1995.

Our community's very future may rest on our watchfulness.

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper. Published every Thursday by Brown Publishing Co., Inc. 1201 South Eastern Avenue • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104 Telephone (702) 383-4030 • Fax (702) 383-3114

Ed & Betty Brown, Founders
Lee Brown, Publisher / Editor
Ramon Savoy, Advertising & Marketing Dir.
Lourdes Cordero-Brown, Office Mgr.
William G. Ramirez, Sports Editor
Willis Brown, Production Manager
Thomas Hill, Distribution
Don Snook, Graphics

Members:
National Newspaper Publishers Assoc.
West Coast Black Publishers Assoc.
This newspaper is audited by:
Community Papers Verification Service,
6225 University Ave., Madison, WI 53705
(608) 238-7550

Contributing Writers:
Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams
Ray E. Willis (CCSD)
Rev. Jesse Scott (NAACP)
James S. Tate, Jr., M.D. (NAARPP)
R. K. Brown
Gwen Walker
Diana Aird
Timothy C. Williams
Terrence R. Johnson
Loretta A. Hall

Subscriptions payable in advance
Six months \$15.00
Twelve months \$25.00
The rates apply to Continental United States only