

Point of View

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TO BE EQUAL

WORKING PEOPLE

By Hugh B. Price

President National Urban League

America urgently needs to implement employment and income policies which put working people back on the "up" escalator.

If elected officials and business leaders who make the economic rules fail to reverse the socially corrosive economic trends, they'll do American people and gradually undermining public confidence in the American way of life.

As Dennis MacShane, a British Minister of Parliament, once said of his society which applies equally to ours: "A rising (economic) tide does lift all boats while a sinking one exposes some very nasty things on the beach."

We've now witnessed the nastiest thing imaginable. I speak, of course, of the Oklahoma City bombing.



HUGH B. PRICE

If there's any silver lining in the upheavals of the past year, it's that Americans of all complexions and persuasions finally seem to be waking up to the kind of country we've become and are genuinely worried about whether that's the kind of society we want to be.

Even the worldly U.S. Senators who conducted hearings on the militias were startled by what they heard.

We must make America work again for Americans. And not merely for white males.

It must work for minorities and women as well; first, because we're all Americans and, second, because the American economy needs all of us.

It's high time for whites and minorities, males and females, who are riding separate escalators downward to look over their shoulders at their fellow Americans in the same fix.

It's time we coalesce to make the economy work for everyone once again. Only if that happens will we have any hope of reconnecting the many communities that make up America.

In recent years, it's been fashionable for social critics and media

pundits to fret about the erosion of a unifying sense of community in America.

They pine for the happy days following World War II when America was prosperous, when jobs were plentiful and paid well, when children were respectful of elders, when the media was tame, and when public discourse was reasonably civil.

In other words, they pine for the days when all was right with America and thus with the world.

This pretty picture is seductive to be sure—and accurate to a point. The trouble, of course, is that blacks weren't in this picture due to segregation, and many women were confined to the kitchen thanks to sexism. Nostalgia buffs can forget it. We'll never return to those bygone days when people supposedly knew their place.

Yes, America does need to put working people on the "up" escalator.

We must reverse the socially corrosive trends that are driving deeper schisms between American people and confidence in the American way of life.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

LITTLE VICTORIES IN THE WAR

By Bernice Powell Jackson

Every week there are new and frightening headlines. Every week there are stories on the community grapevines. Stories

of the violence which is gripping communities across this nation. Stories of children who are victims of drive-by shootings. Stories of children who are

murdered or who are murderers. But amidst these grim tales are stories of hope and stories of successes as people fight to reclaim our children and take

back our streets.

In Washington, D.C., my home town, violence has reached epidemic proportions. As in many of our cities, many

young people are lost to the streets often because there is no one to care about them, no one to help give them a positive self-image. Too many of our young people feel abandoned and alone.

But more and more programs are beginning to focus on building self-esteem for teenage girls and boys. In Washington, D.C. the city government initiated a program called Turning Points, which works in seven junior high schools to focus on personal responsibility and self-respect.

In Prince George County, MD just outside Washington, there is the Female Achievers program. Each week the girls in this program stand before their peers and take responsibility for their actions. Once a month they meet with their mothers. "They showed me that drugs and



Bernice Powell Jackson

alcohol aren't worth it because your friends will lead you all sorts of ways and you've got to do it for yourself," said one 13 year old, adding, "When you realize all the stuff you've got going for you, it is easy to stop."

The group is led by the secretary in the guidance department of the junior high school where the girls attend. Herself a mother of six daughters and the wife of a former alcoholic, she confronts the girls' bad (See Civil Rights, Page 4)

ALONG THE COLOR LINE

MILLION MAN MARCH: AN ANALYSIS OF BLACK PROTEST

By Manning Marable

Part Two of a
Three-Part Series

Undoubtedly, within weeks, the national media will launch a campaign among national black leaders in politics, business and entertainment, demanding that they publicly "denounce" the Million Man March. The March will be attacked as an action of self-segregation," because it is all-black. Prominent blacks will be humiliated and pressured to step forward, to deplore the anti-Semitism of Farrakhan, to condemn the questionable leadership of Chavis, to tell patient, long-suffering black folks to "stay home."

We may experience a replay of the sad and sorry events surrounding the June 1994 African American Leadership Summit in Baltimore, when a historic meeting of black representatives reflecting a wide spectrum of interests and constituencies was stereotyped and smeared solely due to Farrakhan's presence. Last year, only two members of the

forty-member Congressional Black Caucus even attended the Summit. When asked why Caucus members abandoned the Summit and retreated from an honest dialogue with Farrakhan, at least Congresswoman Cynthia A. McKinney was honest: "Because weak-kneed politicians can't stand up to some heat."

Let's clear the air, once and for all. Anti-Semitism has never been a widespread movement of bigotry among African Americans. That's not to say that anti-Semitism doesn't exist within the black community. When one listens to Khalid Abdul Muhammad of the nation of Islam describe Jews as "bloodsuckers of the black nation,"

that's anti-Semitism. Over the years, Farrakhan has vigorously denied being anti-Jewish. Yet he continues to make statements which seem to many as blatantly anti-Semitic. For example, Farrakhan made this statement in a New York City speech in 1986: "Jesus was hated by the Jews. Farrakhan is

hated by the Jews. I am your last chance, Jews. You can't say, 'Never again' to God, 'cause when He puts you in the oven, you are in one indeed."

As deplorable and detestable as anti-Semitism is, as well as white racism and all forms of intolerance and prejudice, that doesn't negate Farrakhan's enormous power and prestige among significant sectors of black America. Black people don't listen to Farrakhan because of his anti-Semitism. They listen to him partially because the traditional civil rights establishment and most black elected officials have failed miserably in providing an effective leadership or vision. They listen because the economic and social conditions are so oppressive within our communities, that they are desperately searching for solutions. They listen because the white political establishment and the media constantly attack Farrakhan, and in doing so, reinforce the aura of his legitimacy among many black



DR. MANNING MARABLE

folk. In the aftermath of last year's Baltimore summit, journalist Carl T. Rowan spoke for millions of African Americans who were disgusted with the media attacks against black leaders like Chavis who engaged in a dialogue with Farrakhan. Jewish protest against the 1994 national Summit "sends a signal that some Jews will cripple or destroy anything that is black in their zeal to punish anyone black who expresses anti-Semitic and racist views." Hardly a black radical, Rowan for years has been identified with coalitions with whites and conservative integrationism. But even Rowan was embittered by the fact that (See Along Color Line, Pg 4)

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