

Point of View

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TO BE EQUAL

Have The Poor Benefited From Affirmative Action?

By Hugh B. Price, President, National Urban League



HUGH B. PRICE

To those critics who say that the poor haven't benefited from affirmative action, I disagree. Since 1961, there has been a ten-fold increase in black students at majority colleges in this country. These ambitious young people didn't arrive on campus with silver spoons in their suitcases. They're largely the offspring of working class and low-income families. The same is true of the growing black middle class. These families didn't descend there from the minuscule black upper class.

They rose up from more modest circumstances due to individual drive and higher educational attainment. A great deal of credit also goes to the determination of universities and employers to include them, and of corporations and government agencies to do business with minority firms. Since poverty still persists in minority communities,

I concede that the job of including poor folk in the educational and economic mainstream is hardly done. Improved education obviously is key. That's precisely why the top priority of the National Urban League is developing our children, academically and socially, for the 21st century.

But if inner-city youngsters are to run the race with our help, they must know that when they cross the finish line, the opportunity structure on the other side really will be open to them. If it isn't, then as distinguished scholars like William Julius Wilson and Elijah Anderson warn us, these young people will remain cynical and isolated if they see no return on their education. That's why it's so important for universities and employers to keep the doors of opportunity wide open for them.

Let me tell you a story which illustrates the continuing need for concerted efforts to include women and minorities because of what they're up against to this day. I didn't make up this story. It comes straight from a New York Times article about the real inner workings of the construction industry. Listen very carefully to this excerpt from

a revealing interview with a white construction foreman:

David Missar... is a 41-year-old white man whose father, grandfather and three uncles were ironworkers.

"I was welcomed with open arms into this union, and I guess in that respect, I have had it pretty easy..." (he says).

He has been a foreman for a decade, and he has worked with Mr. Sharpe (a black union member), whom he considers a skilled ironworker. Still, Mr. Missar says he resents affirmative action.

"I have always felt that it is reverse discrimination, forcing employers to hire some blacks who are not qualified," he said. "And when there aren't enough jobs to go around, people get difficult."

When Mr. Missar recruits directly, bypassing the union hall, he invariably calls whites. "They are the people I know best," he said. But then he adds, "I would not want to trade shoes with Mike (that's Mr. Sharpe, the black ironworker), even if he were more skilled than I am, because I know it would be harder," he said.

Mike's story — and David Missar's — for that matter, is what the struggle to maintain affirmative action is all about.

ALONG THE COLOR LINE

FULL EMPLOYMENT AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

By Dr. Manning Marable

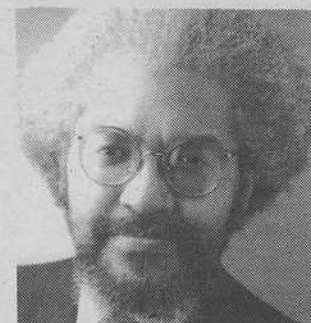
What has escalated white America's opposition to affirmative action, race and

gender-based programs which attempt to redress past and present-day patterns of discrimination? More than any

other single factor, I would say that the politics of discrimination is set into motion by white male fear.

The recent affirmative action debate has occurred in the context where white working class and middle income people

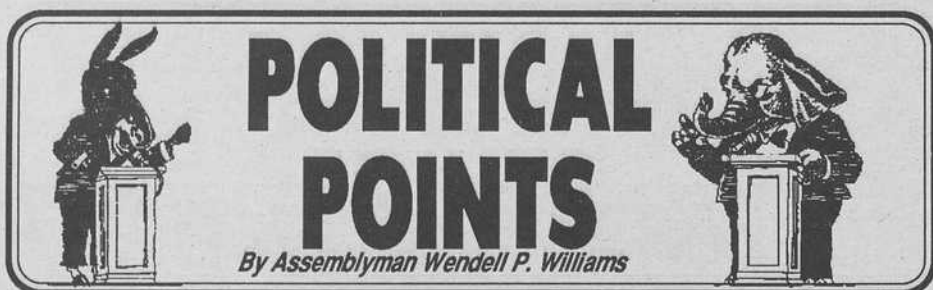
have been steadily losing ground economically. Although gains in disposable personal income, adjusted for inflation and taxes, increased at an annual rate of over 3 percent in 1994 and the beginning of this year, that increase is only due to the fact that millions of two career couples are now in the labor force. Real wages for the average household over the past decade have been either stagnant or have fallen sharply. According to economist Stephen S. Roach, in the first fifty months of the current economic recovery, about 7.8 million jobs were created. By comparison, that was almost 40 percent less than the average rate of job



DR. MANNING MARABLE

growth in the two previous expansions. Globalized capitalism increasingly pits workers against each other internationally, forcing down wages and fringe benefits, and creating nonunion workplaces.

A major reason why white males are as a group, by most (See Along Color Line, Pg 4)



POLITICAL POINTS
By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

A Fan Full Of Funk

Racism! Racism! Why do you people always cry racism when things happen that you don't agree with? Whether it's in court, in the office, on the street, in the newspapers, TV, etc., they all proclaim that it is only our weaknesses that lead us to "cry racism." However, please don't even feel guilty when you have the courage and vision to attack blatant discrimination when you're confronted with it. TO HELL with bootstraps, I always say, especially when someone is trying to snatch away our boots!

Now I'm not about to try to convince anyone right now that what some are proposing to do over at AFAN (Aid for AIDS of Nevada) is racism, but after

I tell you just a little of what's happening at AFAN, then you tell me why and how it's not racism.

AFAN, an organization that identified its overall mission as: Education and Support of Individuals and families Affected by HIV. AFAN says that it is a United Way participating agency funded in part by the Centers for Disease Control, as well as private donors. It would be totally unfair not to stop and mention how serious the disease of AIDS is and continue to be, as well as point out how important the role of AFAN is playing toward helping individuals and families deal with this deadly monster.

Just very quickly, allow me to also tell you that AFAN's large community center, located at

1111 Desert Lane provides an array of opportunities for clients to be supported through education outreach, support groups, socials and a host of other of other programs. In fact, things are going so great at AFAN, employees are gleefully packing up their offices as they look forward to moving into a brand new location at Sahara and Rancho Rd.

However, over at AFAN's other location, AFAN West, which is located at 908 West Owens in the Nucleus Plaza, employees there are sadly packing their offices as they prepare to lose their jobs because the executive director has stated that because of "no money" has caused them to close AFAN West on December



Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

1, 1995. Is something wrong with this picture? Move to a new site at AFAN Central, but close AFAN West. It just didn't fit. Especially when it's known that AFAN Central uses African American stats when applying for grants, however, do not include AFAN West in preparing proposals for such funding. And speaking of employees, there is talk that inequalities in duties and pay for the same job titles exists between AFAN Central and AFAN West.

Also, one would have to question why AFAN West' which caters to mostly Hispanics and African (See Political Points, Pg 4)

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