

# Point of View

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## CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

# ONE MILLION BEAUTIFUL BLACK MEN

By Bernice Powell Jackson

I don't know if I have ever been so proud of my brothers. Shoulders back, heads held high, they went to Washington with determination in their hearts and prayers in their souls. One million strong, a united voice showing respect and calling for respect, showing dignity and calling for dignity, showing resolve and asking for resolve.

It was the first time in our history that our nation allowed black men to assemble. Always

in the past the warriors and the leaders have been cut down or silenced. It was the first time in our history that black men have been allowed to open the wounds so that the healing process might begin. And it was as if one million black men answered the alter call for healing.

I don't know if I have ever been so proud of the hundreds of thousands of young black men who went to Washington. They are the ones whom our society has written off and cast aside.

But on that day they dared to show that they still have a vision for themselves in this country and that they will not be moved. They showed a willingness to take the first step and do their part — now it's up to this nation to do its part.

I don't know if I've ever been so proud of those fathers who took their sons and grandsons to the march so that they might see positive images of black men and know that black men stand for justice and dignity and peace.

That one day might just counteract a lifetime of negative images of black men which pass their faces every moment of every day through television, movies, music and newspapers.

I don't know if I have ever been so proud of my sisters — of Rosa Parks and Betty Shabazz and Queen Mother Moore and Maya Angelou, who represented the others of us who were there in spirit. Rosa Parks, who lamented the fact that her late husband did not live to see that

day, but who reminded us all that our fathers and husbands and sons who have died have not done so in vain. Betty Shabazz and Queen Mother Moore, who reminded us of the totality of our movement for justice, invoked the names of Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey. Maya Angelou, whose eloquent and moving poem so captured the mood of us all that day.

I don't know if I have ever been so proud of Minister Farrakhan and Ben Chavis and



Bernice Powell Jackson

the other leaders and organizers of the march. Ben Chavis showed his gift for building (See Civil Rights, Page 4)

## TO BE EQUAL

# OUR DEVELOPMENT

By Hugh B. Price

President, National Urban League

We must be obsessed with our development, individually and as a people.

I'm talking here about acquiring the competencies and building the capital base so that black folk are respected players in the main economic game, not spectators in the bleachers.

This requires that we cross a bridge in our thinking.

We've no choice but to cross it because the rules for surviving and thriving in our society are changing fundamentally.

The most basic rule is that if an individual, an institution, an enterprise or a people doesn't have something of value to put on the table, they simply won't be at the table in the 21st century.

There are no shortcuts to the mainstream.



HUGH B. PRICE

As effective as demonstrations and marches are, we must also do the meticulous, unexotic, day-in day-out work of preparing ourselves to swim with the swift and turbulent currents of the mainstream.

That's why we must be obsessed with development — of ourselves and our children, our institutions and our businesses.

We must cast aside any contentment with dependence, at one extreme, and any inclination toward excess consumption at the other.

The time has come, my fellow African Americans, for investment and development to become the guiding ethos of our existence.

It's essential for our children's sake as well as our own.

By now you may be wondering exactly what this means.

An obsession with development means we must grow and support our businesses so that they create even more jobs and wealth.

It means our children must be reared to understand what

business is all about so that entrepreneurship becomes instinctive.

We need thousands more entrepreneurs to follow in the footsteps of those daring and visionary folks who have ventured out on their own over the years.

It means we must support those institutions that have been vital to our survival and success.

Out sororities and fraternal orders. Our churches and community organizations. The NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. The Children's Defense Fund.

And, I list us last only out of good taste, our vibrant and indispensable Urban League movement that has served us so very well.

It means using all the economic muscle we possess to advance our interests with those who covet our purchasing power.

African Americans represent a \$400 billion market, which is growing faster than other groups. We should use that leverage to our advantage.

This is why the National Urban League pulled its 1996 national conference out of Los Angeles.

We want to transmit a clear signal to California's tourism industry, probably the second or third largest industry in the state, that their Governor's opposition to affirmative action and thus his indifference to the inclusion of women and minorities in the California mainstream is simply unacceptable.

In other words, we of the Urban League not only bark; we bite. I'm proud that we were the first national organization to step up to the

(See TO BE EQUAL, Page 4)

## THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

# Why The Black Man Marched On Washington

(Part 1)

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

There has been much debate and dialogue within the white media since the Million Man March as to its true meaning. A paramount fixation of the politicians and pundits is who and what really organized the march. Reverend Jesse Jackson insisted it was Newt Gingrich and Clarence Thomas. The Jewish establishment said it was demagoguery. Bill Clinton said it was indifference to racism. And Minister Louis Farrakhan, whose resonating call for atonement and rejuvenation struck a deep chord in Black America, said it was the Almighty.

Here's still another candidate: the complete failure of white-led American liberalism and its political instrument, the Democratic Party, to deliver on

its promise to solve the race problem in America.

Minister Farrakhan quite pointedly and properly reminded us of the findings of the Kerner Commission 30 years ago that there were two separate and unequal societies, one Black and one white, one destitute and one with opportunity. In response, the country's leading political, cultural, and social institutions undertook to close that gap and to conduct a massive War on Poverty, enacting and enforcing legislation to close the racial divide and create a Great Society.

The primary vehicle for accomplishing this was, of course, the Democratic Party. Skillfully melding the ideological and the practical (the shrewdest of Democrats believed that an expanded and energized Black

electorate could propel the party to greater political victories and control of the burgeoning welfare state), the Democrats went to "war." But unlike other wars Americans had fought, where total victory was the only option, the War on Poverty was short-lived. While millions and millions of dollars poured into an anti-poverty infrastructure that sprang up almost overnight, and innovative education approaches like Head Start were installed in every Black community, the War on Poverty programs quickly became patronage mills and political bases for a new generation of mostly Democratic politicians. Eradicating poverty was no longer moral and social crusade for the liberal establishment. It became a highly politicized and highly profitable game.



DR. LENORA FULANI

In 1968, with the Vietnam claiming greater and greater commitment and national resources than the War on Poverty, and with the Democratic Party rocked by internal battles over Black participation (As early as 1964 Fannie Lou Hamer led the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegates to the national convention that year and faced down a thoroughly racist and uncompromising (See Blk Empowerment, Pg 4)

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