

POINT OF VIEW

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

The end of Jesse Jackson

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

When Reverend Jesse Jackson set out to seek the Presidency in 1984, his campaign was as much a national moral crusade as it was a bid for the Democratic Party nomination. It was an electrifying grassroots effort, in which Black voters took the lead in trying to reshape the Democratic Party into a genuinely progressive and inclusive institution in the face of the



DR. LENORA FULANI

neo-conservative and racist onslaught led by Ronald Reagan. Rev. Jackson was an eloquent spokesperson for the locked out and the left out—for the "boats stuck on the bottom." He was adamant that party rules which skewed convention power toward unelected super delegates and away from delegates based on the size of the popular vote had to be changed. He maintained that Black America should refuse to give the party a "blank check" and should maintain its independence. He even went so far as to threaten that if Black voters, the conscience of the Democrats, were not fully embraced by the party, then they might have to go elsewhere, i.e., independent.

Jackson was mercilessly attacked by the white media and while his prime time address to the San Francisco convention inspired many, it also had to include (because the white Democrats demanded it!) his apology to the party for his "intemperance" also known as his independence. Many Jackson delegates wept openly on the convention floor during his speech. They would have walked out if Jackson had but said the word. Fifty-seven percent of African-Americans surveyed not long afterwards

said they would have supported Jackson if he had gone independent and initiated a new, third party. In 1988, Rev. Jackson ran again and doubled his vote, reaching new levels of popularity with white and Hispanic voters. Still, he was snubbed by the traditional Democratic liberal coalition, when Michael Dukakis refused to even consider him as a running mate. Not only was Rev. Jackson being sidelined. The vision and hope that his active presence and expanded base in the Democratic Party would lead the party in a more progressive and populist direction was being shattered.

In 1992, Rev. Jackson did not run. The conservative Democratic Leadership Council launched the presidential candidacy of Bill Clinton. From the start, Clinton was tagged with character problems, including the numerous extra-marital affairs he had conducted while Governor of Arkansas. He was desperately trying to establish himself as presidential material, which consisted largely of denying the long list of alleged sexual encounters, holding hands with this wife on national television and showing he was willing to forego the Democratic Party's long-time record of opposition to the death penalty. This "tough (read: white) enough to be President" persona was exemplified in a large by his racing back to Arkansas in the middle of the campaign to preside over the execution of a mentally impaired African-American man, Ricky Ray Rector. This posture was further

(See Empowerment, Page 16)

TO BE EQUAL

Taking care of all of us

By Hugh B. Price,

President, National Urban League

Four years ago when the Walt Disney Company publicly pledged to hire 200 young people from poverty-stricken South Central Los Angeles to work at Disneyland, more than 600 youths turned up for interviews—even though the jobs involved a two-hour commute between home and work.



HUGH B. PRICE

"They were wonderful kids, outstanding kids," a delighted Disney Company executive later told a reporter for the New York Times. "We didn't know they were there."

I thought of Disney's experience when I watched Christopher Reeve, his body confined to a wheelchair, but his spirit soaring, described his vision of what America should be to a rapt audience at the Democratic National Convention.

Referring to Franklin Roosevelt's guiding the country through the Great Depression, Reeve said that "the most important principle FDR taught us" was that "America is stronger when all of us take care of all of us." One couldn't ask for more appropriate words to contemplate and be inspired by as we celebrate Labor Day and, this year, look forward to the Presidential Election campaign.

Last weekend, many of us can celebrate Labor Day because we have jobs. However much we grouse about work, we can be thankful that we have a job—and the steady income it brings, and the self-esteem and sense of participation in the larger society it brings.

Labor Day underscores that both for the society and the individual work is simultaneously a necessity, a privilege, and, yes, a right. For the great mass of people, to be unemployed, to be without work is to be separated, cut adrift from the rest of civil society.

William Julius Wilson, the noted sociologist, brought that truism to life in poignant and disturbing detail two weeks ago in an article in The New York Times Magazine simple titled, "When Work Disappears."

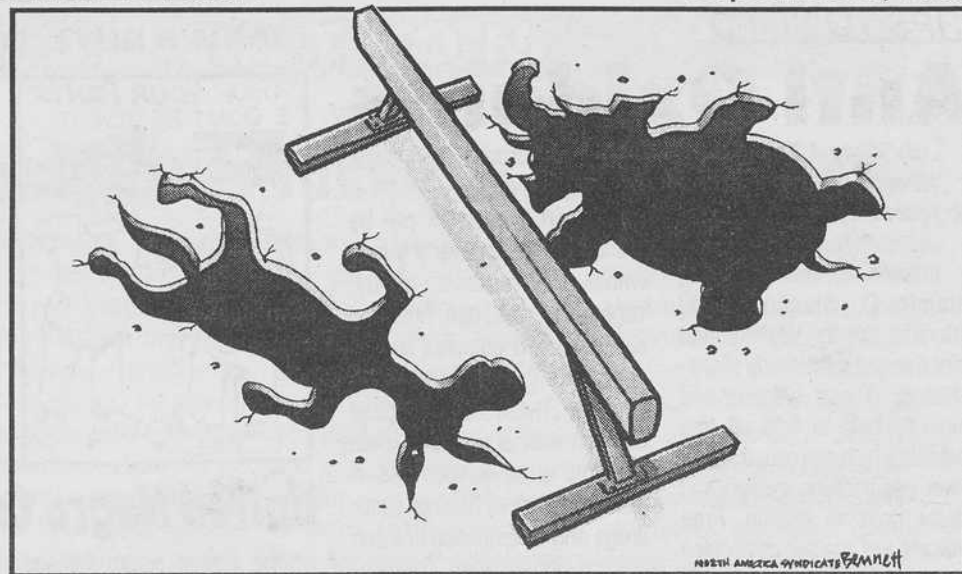
The article, from Professor Wilson's forthcoming book, explored the impact within and outside inner-city black neighborhoods of the disappearance during the past three decades of enough jobs to employ the majority of those neighborhoods' residents.

To greatly simplify an article, and a book that all of us should read, the impact of the loss of jobs has been; the impoverishment of most of these neighborhoods' residents; the destruction of the neighborhoods' businesses and severe decline of their housing stock; the flight of many of the neighborhoods' employed residents; and a literal hollowing out of what had once been a stable community.

In the vacuum, criminal activity, particularly the scourge of drug-trafficking, takes root. The result of this economic deprivation has been an intensifying social isolation that further divorces those trapped in poverty from the mores of the rest of the society.

Professor Wilson also makes clear, however, that isolation does not prevent the devastating effects of the great depression in inner-city America from showing up outside them.

Professor Wilson, who is also a trustee of the Urban League, states plainly that the difficulties of these neighborhoods and their residents stem not from moral deficiencies, or lack of individual initiative, but from the lack of a basic component (See To Be Equal, Page 16)



The Balanced Budget Beam

How Clinton has failed Black America and what can be done

Part 1

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson, Ph.D.

It was not a good moment for "wanna be" presidential candidate Bill Clinton during a late night reception at the Democratic Leadership Council confab in May 1991. A group of angry Black delegates thought that Clinton sounded more like a Republican than the Republicans. They demanded to know if he would sacrifice Black interests to nab white middle-class votes? One of the delegates recalled that Clinton admitted that "we've got to outdo the Republicans."

He did. At that Democratic convention he delivered a bible thumping speech hammering on law and order and Reagan-style family values. During the campaign he toured America's heartland pounding home a conservative "values" message to Nixon-Reagan's "silent majority" and "forgotten man." He distanced himself from Jesse Jackson, attacked rapper Sister Souljah for her alleged anti-white remarks after the Los Angeles riots, skipped a promised appearance at the Black publishers convention, and brushed off complaints of some Black staffers that he ignored their advice on key policy issues.

But after a decade of Reagan-Bush racial destruction, Blacks still gave him 82 percent of their vote and contributed significantly to his victory over Bush. In 1996, he's even more popular among Blacks than Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan.

Yet Clinton has done the kind of social and economic damage to Blacks that Reagan-Bush dreamed of, but couldn't do. Clinton's report card on the big ticket items that directly impact on African-Americans must be marked with failure.

• **Racial Healing.** Clinton asked white Americans to "respect" the O.J. Simpson verdict, not accept it. The subtle

distinction reinforced the false belief of many white Americans that the predominately Black jury acquitted Simpson on the basis of race rather than the prosecution's failure to prove its case. In a speech following the Million Man March, Clinton repeated these ancient stereotypes about Blacks.

"Violence for white people too often comes with a Black face."

(Fact: The majority of violent crime against whites is committed by other whites).

"It isn't racist for whites to say they don't understand why people put up with....drugs being sold in the schools or in the open."

(Fact: The majority of drugs users and abusers are white).

"It's not racist for whites to assert that the culture of welfare dependency can't be broken unless there is first more personal responsibility."

(Fact: The majority of welfare recipients are white).

Many whites blame and scapegoat Blacks for America's social problems. Clinton apparently does too.

• **Affirmative Action.** Following conservative Republican and media-driven claims that white males were losing ground to minorities, Clinton in 1995 promised to end "abuses" in federal government

affirmative action programs. But Clinton must know that there is no federal mandate that forces contractors to replace white workers with minorities and women, there are only a handful of government set-aside programs in procurement and contracting, and that the Supreme Court's decision in the *Paradise* case in 1987 is the only case that explicitly upheld quotas. It applied almost exclusively to police and fire departments, and did not prevent these departments from hiring whites.

The issue of affirmative action inflames many whites, and is used by cynical politicians to grab votes. Clinton included.

• **Welfare:** Nixon, Reagan, and Bush promised to end welfare as we know it. Clinton did. They fanned these racial and sexual myths about welfare: It encourages dependency, cheating, laziness, and out of wedlock births. It is a massive drain on the taxpayers. And, a disproportionate number of recipients are mostly poor, black women. Republicans aren't willing to pay for job skills training, education, health, or child care programs to truly end welfare dependency and Clinton isn't either.

• **Crime:** In 1994, Clinton rammed the most wasteful, (See Clinton, Page 16)

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