

Zone

(Continued from Page 12)
development depends to a great extent on what happens to them during these years of promise."

However, the report declares that what happens to all too many during these formative years is just the opposite: Underachievement is very nearly the norm, and it is not limited to children in one racial or economic category. Indeed, underachievement is nearly as common among children of middle-and-upper-income parents as among

children of less-affluent and poor parents. As the report stated, "...by the fourth-grade level, the performance of most schoolchildren in the United States is below what it should be for the nation and certainly below the achievement levels of children in competing countries."

Nonetheless, of course, the problem of underachievement is especially stark for children who are poor and who are not white, because their families have less resources to combat it

and compensate for it. "For them," the Carnegie report states, "the deck can be unfairly stacked against academic success, and the years of

promise can fade to hopelessness and resignation." Un-stacking that deck—that is, improving the schools' educational quality and

improving the support children get from their families and communities has long been part of the Urban League's mission. It is a part we are now emphasizing with our "Doing The Right Thing" campaign.

There is more that we at the Urban League, and American society as a whole, must do to make the ages 3 to 10 truly be years of promise for all our children. We know how to do it

and, as the Carnegie study urges, "What needs to happen now is to put this knowledge and wisdom to work...on a large-enough scale to make significant improvement in children's educational achievements nationwide."

In that way, we can enormously expand the number of America's youth who will be able to find a place in the achievement zone.

Tips

(Continued from Page 7)
Terry Smoderdale, NJ

Exercise can motivate you to stop smoking but it will not offset the ill effects of smoking. The carbon monoxide from cigarette smoke combines with the hemoglobin in the blood much faster than oxygen; which decreases the capacity for oxygen transport in the blood.

Smoking will also make the respiratory muscles work harder to ventilate air. Smoking releases nicotine and 1200 other toxic compounds into the

bloodstream. Once these substances damage the lining of the arterial walls, cholesterol and triglycerides can easily build up slowing blood flow. Smoking also contributes to the formation of blood clots and reduces the HDLs or good cholesterol and increases blood pressure and heart rate.

Exercise will not offset these effects if you continue to smoke. The only thing that will offset these effects is to quit smoking.

Before starting your fitness program consult your physician.

Color line

(Continued from Page 12)
further to the right by the 1990s.

Although a Democrat was elected to the presidency in 1992, the Clinton administration pursued policies which only 20 years before would have been described as "Liberal Republicanism." The "mainstream" of the Democratic Party equivocated or retreated on minority economic set-asides, minority scholarships, affirmative action, majority-minority legislative districts, employment legislation, universal health care, and urban development. Clinton embraced the death penalty,

passed a repressive crime bill which seriously threatened civil liberties, and signed a Republican welfare bill which will devastate the households of millions of poor women and children.

Thus African Americans are challenged by a new "race/class hierarchy" which defines the politics of non-European and oppressed people throughout the world. Our challenge is to build an alternative political movement which grasps the dynamics of global conflict, as well as our conditions inside the US.

Fulani

(Continued from Page 13)

for Perot this year is that it will establish the Reform Party as a legally recognized party in many states and place it on a footing that will make it competitive with the Democrats and Republicans over the long term. This is a certainty.

The unanswered question is where that vote comes from. In 1992, 19 million white Americans voted for Perot and became the most sought after voting bloc in America. We know that the pro-democracy anti-big government white voter will be in the Reform Party and will be a substantial


influence in it. I want to make sure, as this party comes into existence and reshapes American politics, that black America is substantially represented there and becomes a major element of the Reform Party coalition.

In 1964, Malcolm X said: "You put the Democrats first and the Democrats put you last." He was right. He's still right. Shouldn't 1996 be the year we at least put the Democrats second and put ourselves first?

Lenora B. Fulani is an activist and chairs the Committee for a Unified Independent Party.

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