Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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'Crawling along bottom...'

We like the phrase a prominent economist used this week to describe the nation's economy.

Said Michael Evans, "we are crawling along the bottom."

Here is what Evans and others are pointing to:

The economy plagued by recession and bad weather, was hit with more bad news Wednesday, as the prime rate climbed half a point, factory production for January plunged three percent and new housing starts slipped again.

Most dismaying for analysts in and out of government was the increase to 17 percent for the prime rate — the barometer of borrowing costs that are acknowledged as the biggest roadblock to recovery.

The latest three percent drop in factory production, the worst of six consecutive months of declines, brought the federal reserve's index to almost one percentage point below its low in the previous recession, reached in July 1980.

And the struggling housing industry, badly battered after three years of almost uninterrupted deterioration in sales and starts, slipped another notch last month when housing starts fell 0.6 percent, the Commerce Department reported.

Privately owned housing starts in January were at an annual rate of 894,000, the Department said, marking the sixth consecutive month below the million mark. Despite the bad weather, however, the starts of new single family homes improved 5.2 percent.

Chase Manhattan Bank was first to announce an increase to 17 percent in its interest base rate Wednesday, followed quickly by other large banks. The prime rate has gone up 1.25 percentage points this month as the Federal Reserve tightened the screws on the money supply.

Analysts expect still another half-point increase soon.

"Increasing the prime rate is simply going to bring further pressure to bear on capital goods producers and make recovery more difficult," said Jerry Jasinowski, Chief Economist for the National Association of Manufacturers.

This is the view of the dig guys in high finance. When the National Association of Manufacturers says things are rough, you can rest assured that things are really rough.

Let us take some of this fancy national economic data and break it down to the nitty-gritty.

The Reagan Administration's thrusts as to budget are already having a heavy impact on large cities in the East.

Baltimore, a relatively large home-owners city, is showing no housing growth because of the tight money and high interest rates on property purchases.

The future is expected to be even more grim because industrial workers in vast numbers are being forced out of jobs in the greater Baltimore area because of the terrible state of the economy.

Blue collar workers are usually the first to feel the brunt of any drastic dip in the economy.

The news this week that city employees, both blue and white collar workers with the municipal government, face layoffs also is even more ominous.

We are used to thinking that government jobs, whatever the short comings, are stable, long-term career situations.

Baltimore is faced with making cuts (because the Feds are making cuts) of workers in critical areas like recreation, traffic, law enforcement and social services.

In addition to throwing more folks onto the unemployment lines, these kinds of cutbacks will impact on all residents, because the agencies affected provide vital city services.

We shudder to think that further cuts in city services like sanitation, street and highway repair, storm emergency programs and the like will eventually feel the crunch and be forced to function with less manpower.

We are indeed crawling along bottom and nothing suggests that the economy will turn around as the President keeps reassuring it will.

Thelonious Monk

No creative personality in America in this century is more deserving of the definition "an American original" than is Theolonious Sphere Monk, the jazz pianist and composer, who died this week.

Monk, in his career, fashioned a body of music so deceptively simple and so completely complicated, that only master musicians are able to express his creations with any degree of success.

Monk, always reclusive, enigmatic, from the first, heard the sounds and rhythms basic to jazz in a way no one else heard.

While he was part of the revolution in black music that came during World War II and taken to the creative heights by Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and their followers, Monk was also slightly apart and slightly aloof from this expression.

In compositions like "Ruby, My Dear," "Well, You Needn't," and "Monk's Dream," the pianist-composer was definitely stating a musical position unique to him.

If Monk has an origin, increasing study of his music implies, it is in the general direction shaped by another master, Duke Ellington.

Which means of course that Theolonious, for all of his presumed radicalism, was underneath it all a solid part of a tradition which is our musical expression.

He was no musical Martian, coming to us from outer space, he was a bench-mark in our continuing musical development.

No one else will write or play music as did Monk, but then someone else will come along and play in their own distinctive way which will also not be replicable.

The Theolenious Monks are singular.

We can best pay homage to his passing by listening again and again to what he left us, a rich body of music.

Rev. Hart's 'qualifications'

Dear AFRO:

There is a certain Orwellian logic to President Reagan's nomination of an opponent of civil rights to be a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. However, it is unacceptable that B. Sam Hart, who opposes the rights of gays and lesbians and the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, should become a member of the governmental body created to support the rights of all Americans.

Rev. Hart's qualifications for the job are dubious at best. As has been reported, he is unknown to most civil rights advocates, even in his home town of Philadelphia. One whould think that appointment to the Civil Rights Commission should come only after having established a clear record in the field.

All those concerned about where the Reagan Administration is heading in the area of civil rights for all minorities, including gays and lesbians, should join in asking the Senate to reject the addition to the Civil Rights Commission of a person so insensitive to the needs and concerns of millions of Americans.

JEFFREY LEVI
President, Gay Activists

MADELINE MURPHY

The more things change

Too many young people have asked the question: "What's so wrong about that comedian in black face?"

It is such ignorance of our recent history representing a dismal picture for our future as black people.

What has happened to oral history in families? What has happened to the study of stereotypes in the main stream of history in public schools?

What does black history mean if it does not help to dispel these stereotypes?

Lerone Bennett, Jr., in February's Ebony magazine proclaims in an article entitled, "Why Black History is Important".

"By telling us where we have been, history tells us where we can go. It prepares for action. It is action itself. ...a record of action."

We are at a time, more than ever, when historical action should imprint a record upon future events. Because the demonstrations by the NAACP in protest against the black face portrayal of Al Jolson by white comedian Berger portends hard times to come.

A most appropriate action during Black History Month.

For a rebuke of the Reagan administration's attitude about civil rights is embodied in the urgent message delivered to the President and Congress by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights:

"The 1980s are a critical period for civil rights. Increased resistance to civil rights progress, the resurfacing of hate groups, the growing frustrations of millions of Americans for whom promises remain unfulfilled, all make the present decade a watershed period."

In addition, we still are at a time described in the Kerner Commission report of 1969, where "One nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white, separate and unequal."

The warning is clear:

"What white Americans have never fully understood, but what the Negro can never forget is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto, white institutions created it, white institutions maintain it and white society condones it."

Against this background, the recent demonstrations against minstrel shows in general and black face as a performance in particular, encompasses a resentment of all these indignities.

Although minstrel shows were a part of pre-Civil War white entertainment, in the late 19th century in order for black performers to achieve note on the stage, they had to degrade themselves by putting on huge red lips, and if they were light skinned, such as Bert Williams, burnt cork.

They not only were the butt of ethnic jokes, but also of ridicule for their so-called slow wittedness, their slooathfulness evincing a child-like stupidity, that kept the stereotype alive that we were indeed less than human, and amenable only to the kind of training given performing seals.

And so added to these performances were the menial chores relegated only to black performers of sweeping up, fetching and carrying, arranging the chairs, while being paid substantially less than their white counterparts.

They could not stay in hotels or eat in restaurants, but depended upon the black community for room and board.

Even whites, who could not attain fame doing their own thing on the stage as singers, dancers or actors, would don black face and receive immediate acclaim.

To such an extent was this so, ironically, Harper's Magazine in 1899 describing "The Negro on the Stage," mentioned as a matter of course only white men masquerading in black face — from Ann Charters' book "Nobody," the story of Bert Williams, McMillan Co., 1970.

Therefore, in the recent past we may number Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor among those who achieved fame riding on the talents of Bert Williams, who incidentally resented the burnt cork and white lips that obscured his natural talent as comedian and actor.

We, who are at the lowest rung of the social-economic-political ladder, can ill afford portrayals today which continue to stereotype us. They take us back to the dark days of the past relegating us to less than second class status.

We have fought too long and hard to gain some measure of dignity across all strata of employment and elective offices to now have ethnic jokes, parodies, buffoonery reduce us to objects of ridicule.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the NAACP for the reaffirmation of these aspirations, for making us question how this kind of extension of Ben Vereen's buffoonery at the Reagan Presidential Inauguration might well usher in a new wave of this blatant racism.

It seems indeed the more things change, the more they remain the same. And do not forget it.

Commentaries by Madeline Murphy can be heard every Tuesday during the 6 p.m. newscast on WEAA-FM.

Letters

The minstrel:

Sorrow, misery were his mantle

Dear AFRO:

One of the most effective vehicles for conveying the notion of black inferiority was the minstrel.

Overstated and overcolored eyes and lips, and black face all wrapped in sorrow, misery and self-hatred were his mantle. I thought he had been killed and buried long ago, but here he is back again, in our midst, at the Baltimore Hilton.

If the white citizen of the area anticipates relaxing and enjoying themselves through flights of fancy back to the times when black minstrel wrapped the cloak of inferiority around black citizens, they are wrong.

For the black citizens of this city will not rest until this rascist throwback has been buried, never to rise again.

ENOLIA P. McMillan
President, NAACP Baltimore Chapter

NAACP to be congratulated

Dear AFRO:

The Baltimore Downtown Hilton has engendered ill will to a large segment of the Baltimore population who have patronized them with their many big audience affairs by permitting the blackface act to go on.

The act is demeaning, for it presents a race of people as having grotesque facial features, so other races might laugh and be "entertained."

The alerting of this Berger performance by the NAACP is quite commendable.

True mimics perform during their contemporary's lifetime so one can relate to it and not dig out an act that is almost a half century old from the pre-civil rights days.

With the emergence of newer hotels with more respectable entertainment, the Baltimore downtown Hilton stands to lose more than it would gain with the blackface act.

MIRIAM L. WINBORNE

Could postal worker's death have been prevented?

Dear AFRO:

While reading the News American Thursday, Jan. 14, I observed in an article, some data that really made me mad, then sad, then mad again.

This article made reference to Tom Conigliaro, a 37-year-old former athlete who had a massive heart attack and arrived at the hospital showing neither pulse nor blood pressure. He was revived with cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.

What made me so damn mad is my brother, Earl Pierce Giles, died Dec. 26, 1981, at the Main Post Office of an apparent heart attack.

According to a Jan. 2, 1982 article in the AFRO, the Post Office admits there are shifts during the week that do not have nurses on duty, but each shift is supposed to have a trained employee in CPR.

I would like to ask a couple of questions:

1. If the Post Office has a trained person on each shift in CPR, "where was he the night my brother died?"

2. As massive as the Main Post Office working areas are, "is it possible for one person to cover all of this territory by himself?"

If you analyze the circumstances surrounding my brother's death, you would understand my reasons for being mad. While working, my brother slumped over at approximately 9:15 p.m., his fellow workers called the foreman.

The foreman sent for a wheelchair and they rolled my brother to a platform downstairs. At approximately 9:28 p.m., the Fire Department was called and they responded with attendants by 9:31 p.m.

They administered oxygen and performed CPR. He was taken to Church Home Hospital and was pronounced dead on arrival.

The Post Office can prevent other families from going through this traumatic experience — remediate your medical facilities at the Post goffice and give every life its just do.

GENE A. GILES

PARREN J. MITCHELL

Legislative perfidy

On Tuesday, Feb. 9, 1982, I addressed the U. S. House of Representatives. It was the first opportunity I had to speak on the incredibly bad action taken by the U. S. Senate on Feb. 4, 1982.

On that date, the Senate passed two anti-bussing amendments so stringent in character that, if enacted into law, would simply eliminate bussing as a last resort for our federal courts.

The first Senate amendment would prevent the Justice Department from seeking court remedies to segregated schools, while the other amendment would, in actuality, prevent the federal courts from ordering bussing to achieve school desegregation.

Senator Sarbanes and Senator Mathias did not vote for this legislative usurpation of powers. I am proud to say.

The following is a copy of my statement to the U. S. House of Representatives.

"Mr. MITCHELL, of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, on Feb. 4, 1982, the other body passed anti-bussing amendments which are so stringent, that they threaten to end bussing as a last resort strategy to achieve school desegregation.

"The amendments will be challenged in court and found to be unconstitutional. It is merely a matter of time before the legislative perfidy is expunged.

"However, we must try to understand what was behind this attempted rape of the constitution.

"There may be one or two members who believe that the amendments were constitutional or, put another way, that busing to achieve school desegregation is unconstitutional. Such persons merely require further education.

"Others would argue in unctuous tones that even the minorities don't like school bussing.

"To them I would say first that, any parents who truly care about the education of their children should seek the best possible education for them, even though some sacrifices will be demanded of the parents.

"Second, these experts in minority attitudes should recall that, during the 1950s and 1960s, some Negroes staunchly defended racial segregation in schools; places of public accommodation; and, indeed, even in the churches of the nation.

"I am convinced that some who voted for these amendments, those venal amendments, have such contempt, or even hidden hatred for those who are black that they would trammel the constitution by attempting to wreck the historic separation of powers that exists between the legislative, judicial and executive branches of government.

"Their contempt and hatred for those of us who are black is a part of the cloth from which the cloak of tyranny is woven."

Immediately after I spoke, the Parliamentarian of the House told me my words in the Congressional Record would have to be changed because I had insulted the Senate by calling some of its members "liars and rapists."

So in the Congressional Record, my words "the legislative perfidy" now reads "the effect would be expunged."

Also in the "Congressional Record," my phrase "the attempted rape of the constitution" was changed to read "this unconstitutional action."

They can change what they want, but the television audience had heard my words. It was indeed legislative perfidy and an attempted rape of the constitution by the U. S. Senate on Feb. 4, 1982

Samuel BANKS

The siege of blacks, poor people continue

Each day it becomes more and more apparent Reaganomics or supply-side economics represent abject failure and suffering for more than 50 million Americans.

Socio-economic suffering, anguish and pain particularly are evident in terms of a marjority of the 31 million black Americans in our nation.

There has not, in a substantive and enduring way, been an amelioration or improvement in the socio-economic condition of the preponderant number of black Americans since the end of World War II.

Structural and long-term unemployment has been a pernicious and calamitous onus for a majority of black Americans since 1945. Current socio-economic indicators depict a worsening of the wretched economic status of most black Americans.

A few years ago the media, print and non-print, sought to portray broad segments of black Americans entering mainstream America or the prized middle-income strata.

The prodigious tragedy was the data did not match the bleak and unsettling reality.

The National Urban League's "State of Black America," (1981) provides gripping, grim and factual data to portray the separate and unequal position of the overwhelming majority of black Americans and the steady erosion of a national commitment to human and civil rights.

Black average income still is measured at 60 percent of average white income and in a state of further deterioration.

The puffery, obfuscation and meanspirited focus of Reaganomics linked with the enormous backlog of social, educational, health and economic needs, have exacerbated the human condition.

Black Americans and the poor, as in the past, are bearing the brunt of the ferocious and withering fusillade of Reaganomics.

Now, however, workers who believed they were secure by virture of their education, social class, color and political savvy are being dismissed or demoted in the name of austerity or the mendacious and misleading view of reducing the budget.

The fact of the matter is President Reagan is neither reducing our national deficit nor balancing the budget.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports full time employment has decreased from a high of 100 million persons to 90.8 million and federal budget deficits will soar from $109 billion in fiscal year 1982 to a high of $157 billion in 1983.

It is demonstrably clear, stripped of ornate, theatrical and euphonious language, that the Reagan economic policies represent, not a saving or budget balancing, but a shifting of desperately needed human and monetary resources from socio-economic programs to defense.

It is estimated by 1985 more than $1.7 trillion will be spent for defense.

As I have indicated, a majority of black Americans and the poor are reeling from Reaganomics.

A majority of black Americans and the poor now have to make agonizing, debasing and dehumanizing choices between food and utilities; rent and mortgage payments and clothing; needed health care and lunch costs for children; school expenses and college tuition for their children.

The bright spot is the lacerating and debilitating consequences of Reaganomics are beginning to be felt in white middle America and members of Congress, in an emerging bipartisan effort, have begun to speak out against the shifting of vital human programs for military hardware.

Black Americans through the Congressional Black Caucus, the Maryland Black Caucus, NAACP, Urban League, SCLS, PUSH and community groups have been in the forefront of the national effort to prevent the systematic and brutal dismantling of a half-century of social programs.

As the congressional debates rage in the Congress relative to President Reagan's Fiscal Year 1983 budget, a majority of black Americans and the poor, in the shortrun with unemployment levels more than 15.7 per cent for black adults and more than 55 percent for black youths, greater than our "Great Depression," are caught in a lugubrious and desperate struggle for sheer survival.

Black churches, fraternal groups, sororities and civic groups, given the awesome magnitude and severity of human suffering should open their doors and treasuries to abate and give succor to our people caught in socio-economic storms not of our own making.

While it undoubtedly is true churches and social groups cannot offset the social cutbacks occasioned by the federal government, it is however, true we can do more to provide hope and mitigate human suffering.

I suggest the following for black churches and working blacks to undertake singly or in cooperation with majority group churches and synagogues:

1. Establishment or expansion, where already in place, of food centers to serve at least one meal daily for the hungry and destitute in the community.

2. Give thought to developing, during this period of economic depression in the black community, a special SACRIFICE

3. Seek surplus foods from the federal government as a part of the feeding program. The most recent surplus food, less than six months, should be sought.

4. Enlist the aid and support of retired educators, government workers and others who are available to assist with the food program.

5. Recruit active and retired educators to provide tutorial and enrichment instructional opportunities for individuals who need educational assistance or desire to improve their skills.

The socio-economic situation will worsen before it improves. Nonetheless, we must seize opportunities to develop human potential and possibilities for human decency and growth.

We must, as did our forebears in days of yore, dare to exclaim:

"We are soldiers in the army. We have to fight although we have to cry. We have to hold up the blood-stained banner. We have to hold it up until we die."

We shall survive the current siege of Reagonomics if we do not break faith with our past and weary of well doing. A collective and universal historical and ethical imperative requires it.

ELIZABETH M. OLIVER

City Editor

FOR YOUR PROTECTION WASHER CITY ORDERED TO PAY BACK CONSUMER PROTECTION

Division of the Attorney General's Office has ordered a Baltimore used appliance dealer to pay a total of $4,293.90 in restitution to 17 customers who were sold defective goods he then failed to repair.

Assistant Attorney General H. Robert Erwin, Jr., Chief of the Division also adopted the recommendations of a hearing officer that require Vernon J. Harris, owner of WASHER CITY, 3007 GREENMOUNT AVE. to post a conspicuous sign in his store advising consumers to contact the Consumer Protection Division if they have unresolved complaints against him.

Harris also must submit these complaints to binding arbitration with the Division for the next three years.

IN ADDITION, Harris was ordered to post a similarly situated sign containing the details of the warranty terms he offers with each used appliance. These warranty terms also must be printed on each sales slip, Erwin directed.

HARRIS also must keep a detailed file of complaints he receives and a log containing the names, addresses and telephone numbers of each consumer who complains about any item he sells. Both the complaint file and the consumer log must be available for inspection by the Consumer Protection Division.

HARRIS, who sells used refrigerators, washing machines and other appliances, also must put a tag on each item stating its age and the type of repairs he made on it before offering it for sale.

Erwin also ordered Harris to pay an additional $561.64 to the Consumer Protection Division to cover the costs of investigating the complaints it received about his business.

HARRIS WAS FOUND to have sold used appliances he said were in working condition when they were not; failed to honor written warranties; delivered different appliances to consumers than the ones they saw in his store and bought, and failed to extend the warranties he gave when he didn't repair the appliances customers brought in for service during the warranty period, according to Assistant Attorney General Cheri Wyron Levin, who handled the case before the hearing officer.

HOWARD ALUMNI

HOWARD UNIVERSITY Alumni Club of Baltimore is celebrating its 115th Anniversary with a dinner dance to be held on Friday evening, March 15 at the Fontaine Rouge. Music by the "Bill" Cummings orchestra.

Interested persons may call 566 - 2639, 945 - 2424 or 462-2362 for further information before or by Feb. 26.

"SUGAR BABIES," the hit Broadway musical that made burlesque respectable, opens March 2 at the Mechanic Theatre for a three - week subscription run through March 20.

Eddie Bracken stars in the baggy - pants comedian role originally created by Mickey Rooney, while Jaye P. Morgan and Toni Kaye share the singing, dancing and comedy spots currently performed on Broadway by Ann Miller.

"SUGAR BABIES"? is a glittery musical that takes a nostalgic look at the innocent days of burlesque. The musical, now in its third capacity year on Broadway, features showgirls (the "Sugar Babies"), a male ensemble and zany comics recreating some of the greatest moments in burlesque.

Production numbers include a fan dance salute to the great Sally Rand, a belly - dancing tribute to Little Egypt, and a number done with a stage full of doves, among others.

FEB. 24

THE MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE Black Caucus cordially invites you to attend the fourth annual fundraiser Wednesday, Feb. 24 at Martin's West. Cocktails - 7; dinner - 8. Dancing immediately following dinner, open bar. Donation $25.

RED CROSS SWIM PROGRAMS

Red Cross swimming classes for all levels of swimmers are scheduled to begin March 3 at Mergenthaler High and March 4 at Poly - Western.

BEGINNER, Advanced Beginner, Intermediate, Swimmer and Advanced Lifesaving programs will run at both locations, from 8 to 10 p.m., for 10 weeks.

REGISTRATION fee for swimming courses is $10; for Lifesaving there is a $10 pool fee and $10 for books.

Pre - registration is required. Telephone 467 - 9905 for information.

30TH REUNION FOREST PARK HIGH

The February 1952 class of Park High School will hold its 30th year reunion on Sunday, May 2 at Cross Keys Inn. A brunch will begin at 11 a.m. Members of the class who wish to attend or who want additional information can call 252 - 7069 or 728 - 2111.

LECTURE ON CIVIL RIGHTS

"The Civil Rights Struggle in Baltimore" is the topic of the presentation scheduled in the University of Baltimore's "Civil Rights Lecture Series."

The lecture will be held Wed., Feb. 24 from 12 to 1:30 p.m. in Langsdale Library Auditorium, Maryland at Oliver.

Mrs. Enolia P. McMillian, president of the Baltimore Branch NAACP, is guest speaker.

SPONSORED by the U of B Chapter of the NAACP, the event is free and open to interested community members.

MRS. McMILLAN received a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Howard University in 1926 and a master's in administration and supervision from Columbia University in 1933.

HER CAREER in the Baltimore Public Schools has spanned 34 years, 21 of which were spent teaching and working for equal salaries and fair promotions in the system.

From 1956 until retirement in 1969, Mrs. McMillan was the vice - principal for Clifton Park and Cherry Hill Junior High Schools and Dunbar Senior High.

THE FAIR

The Fair at Baltimore, formerly known as The Baltimore Winter Market of American Crafts, will expand its exhibit area to the upper level of the Baltimore Convention Center.

The Fair Friday, Feb. 26 to Sunday, Feb 28, will display ceramics, wood, leather glass and mixed media in the Pratt Street Exhibition halls, and jewelry, metal and fibers on the upper level of the Convention Center.

HOURS are Friday, Feb. 26, noon to 9 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 27 and Sunday, Feb. 28, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is $3.50 for adults, children under 12 free. Jews; and the Affirmative Action Committee of United Way. 9WES

UNSELD

WES UNSELD and his daughter Kimberly are taking Introductory Sign Language at Red Cross Saturday mornings, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Wes, who played for the Bullets from '68 to '81, is now Vice President of the Capital Center.

He says his reasons for learning Sign Language are:

SOMETIME ago he was involved with a Big Brothers Club, and there were three deaf members with whom he was unable to communicate.

He also plans to work with Gallaudet College (for the deaf) in Washington, D.C., giving talks on Black History during the month of February and he wanted some familiarity with Sign Language.

RED CROSS Youth Services has been teaching Sign Language since 1974, and last year trained 900 persons . . . youth and adults.

On Saturday mornings we are currently offering three courses: Introduction to Sign Language, Beginner I and II.

Tony Brown's Comments

Slavery, racism and now murder

One of the causes of the phenomenon of black crime is a deep-seated pathology that has followed black Americans throughout their history in the United States.

Social scientists — black and white — have done countless studies on behavior in the black community and continue to probe the question:

What incites this furious rage in black criminal offenders to force them to aimlessly victimize other members of their own race?

In 1977, more blacks were killed on the streets of America by other blacks than were blacks killed in the entire nine-year Vietnam War.

In 1979, nearly 85 percent of all violent crimes committed by blacks had another black as a victim.

By any barometer, economic, social or otherwise, Afro-Americans suffer disproportionately from crime and its consequences. Blacks dominate the categories of offender AND victim in national crime statistics and represent an enormous majority in prison populations.

However, to speak of black-on-black crime in America is not to simply speak of criminal injustices inflicted on each other among a group of approximately 30 million people.

It is to speak of a seven-member - portion of that 30 million who are trapped in a subclass rancid with poverty, high unemployment and, in some cases, chronic hopelessness — which aptly describes America's new black underclass.

On my television series this year, Judge Thomas R. Jones, an Associate Judge of the Appellate Court of New York City and president-elect of the Association of Supreme Court Justices of New York City, explained as a black judge, he is frustrated with the conditions in the black community and the onslaught of black-on-black crime.

"They are the principal victims of crime — black people, their children, the working people, the old people.

"They're the ones who suffer most from crime, and when people talk about being soft on crime, those who are soft on criminals are being hard on the working people of the black community who can't spend their lives in anything except terror."

Dr. Chancellor Williams, author of "The Destruction of Black Civilization," explains black-on-black crime in the context of self-hatred.

"When you see a black man stabbing a black man, what is he doing? It isn't a black man, he doesn't see his brother that he's stabbing, no.

He for the moment, the stabber, is a white man and he sees before him a nigger, kill nigger."

Last year, 23,044 persons were murdered in the United States. In most instances, the murders occurred in southern states and mostly during the month of August.

Approximately 44 percent of the victims were men. Fifty-three out of every 100 were white and 42 were black. However, if you take into account the difference in population between these two groups, roughly 190 million whites to 30 million blacks, blacks were killed at a ratio of nine to one over whites.

In a New York Times poll, 77 percent, when asked if the death penalty should be reinstated, said yes. And surprisingly, seven out of 10 blacks, in spite of the fact capital punishment hits blacks hardest, when asked the same question, said yes.

No one group in this country is solely responsible for crime — including those who commit them. There is enough blame to go around.

Demagogic politicians who soft peddle the problem. Judges who believe courts are set up only for the purpose of defending offenders; other members of the black community who believe these vicious and irresponsible acts against other blacks can be excused on the basis of a "racist society;" right-wingers so reactionary in their solutions they have turned people away from dealing with the problem; white liberals, many of whom are more destructive than helpful.

But the real and imminent threat to older blacks, working blacks and black women is the young Negro man who specializes in their misery.

These people are the helpless prey to a more and more vicious and younger and younger offender who is nothing less than a weapon of genocide against his own people.

I hope we as a people can solve our problems. Because if the black community does not take the intiative, the final solution will come from the outside — and it will be brutal.

Are black leaders necessary?

By Yahya B.A. Muhammad

We, the African American population of this country, have been many times in recent years making statements to the effect: "We don't have any leadership. Where are our leaders? Things are not like they used to be. All of our leaders are dead."

The majority of us have been duped into believing we do not have any leadership, so we will continue the practice of following dead leadership, foreign leadership or even worse, contrived, manipulated leadership, which is to the advantage of others and not to ourselves.

It is time for us to wake up and really look into this word "leadership." What does it really mean to us as a people?

The better meaning is to look to someone or some group who will give guidance to the rest, someone or some group that will be a role model for us to follow, someone who will show us the methods of obtaining solid, meaningful objectives.

We cannot look at ourselves like other ethnic minorities in this country look at themselves, because we have a different history than they do. We were brought here in chains and they came here as free men.

We were robbed of our past history completely and they were not. It becomes necessary for us to have to work out our problem a bit different than they do.

We need a group model to draw strength from in working out our individual problems. They already have group models.

The Irish, the Japanese, the Hispanics and the rest, including the American Indian, all have some glorious history they can point to and draw strength for their individual lives today, but we do not.

Many of you may disagree with these comments, but deep down in your heart you know it is true.

We do not know whether we came from Ebo or the Mandingo. We do not know what our language was or anything else about ourselves, other than we all came from the African continent.

We even feel ashamed when we are in the presence of other ethnic groups and they begin to speak in their ethnic tongue and we have no ethnic tongue we can truly say is ours.

That is why it becomes very necessary for us to identify and respect living leadership. We need a group model which has stood the test of time, one we can look back to and be proud we are a part of.

Many of us try to go back and physically pick up dead leaders to follow, because we know they cannot put any demands on us, they cannot talk back.

We liked the piousness of Dr. Martin Luther King, the fiery tongue of Malcolm X, the boldness of Elijah Muhammad, so we say they were our leaders.

Many of us were too afraid to follow them in life, yet we claim to follow them in death. They cannot lead us in death, they no longer have to grapple with the problems we are faced with today.

When we cling to them as the leaders of today, we are saying we no longer have anyone among us with vision, with foresight and enough determination to cut a better path for us as an ethnic group.

Or, we are admitting we are as the white folks describe us, a bunch of lazy, do nothing niggers, who need to be shipped back to Africa or anyplace else, as long as we get out of his sight.

We know we are better than the aforementioned and we also know living leadership is necessary because the makeup of our own body testifies that fact to us.

Your head, brain and mind is the leader and the whole body works to defend that leadership. The five senses, sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch all contribute to the mind; they help it make decisions.

We should work to strengthen the leadership in ourselves and to strengthen the leadership amongst us ethnically. We need spiritual leadership, moral leadership, leadership in education, medicine, economics, as well as political leadership.

Many of us have turned thumbs down on the political arena because we say it does not make a difference whether we vote or not, it is corrupt and they are going to do as they please anyway.

It does make a difference. I think we all can see it does now, by observing the actions of the present Administration we allowed to be elected by boycotting the polls in the last election.

We can participate in the political process without becoming corrupt and we can clean up the corruption by being balanced ourselves.

We should support candidates, who are balanced physically, morally and spiritually, who are not extremist in any direction, leadership that will not speak down tous, but, will speak to us as equals, leadership that will not make jokes of our problems, but will work sincerely to eradicate those problems.

We know with leadership goes great responsibility. We expect our leaders to be responsible, to give the best guidance and direction possible.

Dowe have such leaders amongst us today? The answer is yes, all we have to do is open our eyes, identify them and then be strong enough to follow them.