Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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Credit interest controversy

What is good for business is not always good for consumers.

The current furor over Governor Hughes' recommendation to the General Assembly that banks be granted the right to extend unlimited interest to loans or a ceiling of 36 percent continues.

Many legislators, consumer activists and labor leaders feel strongly that while this policy would certainly help the banking industry it would be disastrous for middle and low income families who must purchase on credit for extended amounts of time on major items.

We feel the 36 percent limit Hughes is pushing is far too high a penalty for consumers to pay.

In these economically depressed times the thought of paying up to 36 cents on the dollar on loans and credit arrangements staggers the imagination.

The banks may need this to revitalize their fortunes.

Most of us, including small business persons, on the other hand would be completely strapped.

Last year the General Assembly signed off on an increase to 18 percent on credit interest rates.

We thought that way too much.

What is being brunted in Annapolis now goes beyond what most families could endure.

We hope legislators remember their true constituents when the final votes are due on this measure.

Shoot first?

States Attorney William Swisher has attracted national notice with his statements about victims or would-be crime victims who kill intruders into their homes.

He has said no charges of consequence will be brought against the cab driver who shot two would-be robbers in his cab earlier this week.

Swisher has further said that his approach will be to give highest priority to the protection of the innocent and fie on criminals.

It is hard to argue with some of what Swisher is saying.

With the increase of rob and kill, rape and kill criminal occurrences where thugs are killing perfect strangers without compunction, there has to be some primary line of defense.

What disturbs us, given Swisher's history of shoot-now, question later, is that some less than well meaning folks might want to structure situations where they can rid themselves of relatives, neighbors, long-time foes under the pretext of guarding their homes.

Swisher ought to temper his shoot first legalisms with some parameters elsewise Baltimore indeed will be Dodge City reincarnated.

Black folk artists teach us to see

By Dr. Lovie King Hammond

Every now and then a museum or gallery will organize an exhibition of works which surpasses anything even they had hoped for in terms of content and overall impact.

"Black Folk Art in America 1930-1980," now on display at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. is just the kind of exhibition to which I am referring.

This show is so seriously important that all black people in this community who have any interest in the arts should see these works.

It should be seen by people who have great questions in their minds about what "art" is or should be. Finally, it should be viewed by people who personally are involved in the struggle to define themselves as artists.

There are more than 400 pieces of work on display executed by 20 black artists. Each person was past 65 years old before they started to work.

None of them saw themselves as artists. Most believed God or some divine spiritual force had directed their energy towards a creative outlet. All of them live in the South, coming from either rural or urban environments.

So why are these 20 people so unique and important to our cultural history? Ironically many of them still are alive and working even though they are well advanced into their 70s and 80s.

They are living, contemporary legacy - giving testimony to our vitality as a culturally distinctive group of people who have prevailed under the most hostile human conditions.

The works demonstrate a celebration of spiritual strength so strong - so alive even the near eventuality of death only can be seen as the triumphant victory of life lived with the force of divine purpose.

What does all this mean in simple terms? No one taught, hence they are called "folk", these people how to paint or sculpt or carve or draw or assemble.

Therefore, the images are fresh, alive and most importantly, uncorrupted. These artists did not need to be told how to work or what to work on. There was no great search for their identities direction.

Each artist is more different than the next:

James Hampton, 1909 to 1964, lived for the better part of his life working as a clerk in Washington, D.C. He was a loner having developed no friendships of any standing. He rented a garage in Northwest Washington for more than 20 years.

After his death, when the landlord went to rent the property again, it was discovered Hampton had created a "heaven" out of found objects covered with silver and gold foil. Crowns, altars, thrones, tablets and offering tables - more than 180 objects with sermons and religious writings covered with objects.

William Edmondson, 1880 to 1953, from Nashville, Tenn. got up one morning from his bed and went out into his backyard because "the Lord told me to cut some stone."

In the beginning, the images were simple tombstones for his neighbors. Then came angels, birds, preachers and school teachers, and "critters" of his imagination.

The materials were the old curbstones discarded by the city repair crews. The modern clarity of these stone carvings rival any of the so-called modern masters of contemporary art.

Sister Gertrude Morgan, 1900 to 1980, probably is the most spellbinding of them all. She was a singer, pianist, guitarist and master of the tambourine.

Sister Morgan founded a chapel, preached, ran an orphanage and a child-care center. Sometime in the mid-1950s, she became convinced she was to become the bride of Jesus Christ. From that time on, she dreamed in white and entire environment became white.

She was a prolific artist painting and writing sermons on literally anything she could get her hands on. Her works "shout" with joy, praises, and jubilation. The brilliant colors and patterns jump out the surface and dazzle the viewers with their prophecies.

The Corcoran's installation of her work is nothing short of magnificent. The entire gallery, floor to ceiling, has been painted white.

This is one of the best exhibitions to be hung in recent years. That it coincides with Black History Month is perfect. That people should get over to see this amazing show would be even better.

The show will be on view until March 28. The Corcoran Gallery is located at New York Ave. and 17th Street, Northwest. Our elders have paved the way for us to find the true paths of our future.

A city full of positive young stars

Rose Willis, Walbrook High's girls' varsity basketball center, embodied the spirit of her team and that of the Maryland Scholastic Association Tournament, last weekend and was named girls' MVP.

Willis exemplifies the Baltimore area's positive student prospects who, in addition to athletics, are involved in music, drama and civic projects such as the foster grandparents program and other efforts which enrich the city's social and cultural fabric.

With the city's and the nation's future in the hands of young people it is good to see so many of them working hard and finding success.

(AFRO Photo by Martin Evans)

ONE MORE TIME — Walbrook's dominating center, Rose Willis, was named girls MSA tournament MVP for the second consecutive year last Saturday. She was 9 for 15 from the floor and grabbed 9 rebounds as the Warriors rolled over Western, 70-31.

AFRO Cartoonist Thomas Stockett in on vacation

MADELINE MURPHY

I'm okay, you're not

In discussing, on a recent talk show, the importance of Black History Month, one of the panelists, a white woman, cleverly diverted the discussion with her plea for the woman's rights movement, as if black women were not a part.

Yet black history is replete with the struggles of black women against rapacious slaveholders, later protecting their men and children, especially their female children, from sordid experiences at the hands of white men and a racist white society.

When viewing the economic plight of people in this country, black women are at the bottom of the ladder, without equal pay, without job security, without the rights white women accept without question and take as their due.

It brought to mind the selfishly motivated thrust of the white women's movement, which in its hierarchy barely acknowledges the existence of black women.

It is as if they are saying "I'm OK, but you're not." As if to reject the notion that so long as black women are not free, white will not be free either. In truth our fates hang together.

In the recent foray over "New Federalism" and the Reagan budget cuts, those who will feel the brunt and bear the burdens of deprivation will be black women and black children.

Reagan himself avers that 41 percent of black children are on welfare and if the dollar cuts in social programs amount to 11 million children being hurt in this country, then we must ask ourselves what manner of genocide is in the offing.

For example out of 400,000 in Maryland who receive Food Stamps, 350,000 will be reduced or cut out of benefits. This includes a large number of black women, from AFDC recipients to the elderly.

The broad scapel of Reaganomics geared toward taking government off our backs while there is a fall in industrial production; where more factories are out of use than ever since 1975; where housing starts are down 44 percent; and the prime rate soars, suggests not so much supply side economics as it does suicidal, genocidal surgery.

But more gravamen, nevertheless, is black attitudes towards blacks. With an economy of such gloom and doom, we still are part of that mentality that believes white is right.

We too believe in our own myopic way somehow we as individuals are OK, but our black professionals, construction workers, builders, doctors, lawyers, nurses are somehow not OK. And these groups also are infected with the same disease of slave mentality.

Several experiences point up this blind arrogance: such as the woman who replied, "I don't want them experimenting on me," when she was questioned about going to a black hospital.

Or another who avowed she would not put her money in a black bank because "black folks don't know nothin' about money," or even a black lawyer in trouble who said the only one who could help him was a big, white lawyer.

Moreover, the irony of all these mindsets is these people have children who become lawyers, bankers, doctors, etc., who must not only depend on black people for a livelihood, but who nevertheless still are crippled with the gut belief black folks are incompetent, unreliable and not worth hiring.

What an awful legacy to hand our children, while we at the same time seek freedom.

Upon seeing the lawyer, he put his head in his hands and moaned, "Oh my God, they sent me a nigger."

Now the robber was due to get a life term if convicted, and in the deep South where he came from, a defendant's black lawyer would have to hire a white lawyer, sit behind him and whisper in his ear the facts of the case, tactics and procedures, since blacks could not address the Court directly.

And so this robber having had the experience in the south of what he called "whispering" lawyers could not imagine a black lawyer doing him any good.

Somehow we still believe we are supposed to be "whispering lawyers" in order to get over.

And maybe as the gloom gets glomier, when that economic doomsday is in sight for black people, we might then recapture that pride in ourselves that unity that will make all the recounting of black history during the month of February somehow worthwhile — a positive injection enhancing our self-worth and self-concept.

Maybe we will learn in the transition not only "I'm OK" but "You're OK" too!

COMMENTARIES by Madeline Murphy can be heard each Tuesday during the 6 p.m. newscast on WEAA-FM radio.

Letters

The other Baltimore

Dear AFRO:

There has been a great deal written about Baltimore in the local, national and international press.

They have written about the Inner Harbor, the new sky scrapers, the new Convention Center; the World Trade Center, the Aquarium, the new Hyatt Regency Hotel; the new Lyric Theatre, overhead walks, the new Federal Bank Building, the new Lexington Mall and the Renaissance.

These are only a few things going on in the Central City. Many of which I am very proud of and voted for.

However, only half of the story has been told. The writers did not say anything about the other Baltimore. I am speaking about black Baltimore.

The Baltimore where many of the more than 200,000 commuters from the surrounding counties pass through daily going to and from their places of business and employment in Central Baltimore.

The Baltimore where the unemployment rate among black teenagers is the highest in the nation and the unemployment rate among adult black men is as high as 50 percent before the Reagan budget cuts.

Those from the other Baltimore still are second class citizens. They do not have anyone in a top policy making position in the business community or the Executive Branch of City Government to speak for them.

For example, Baltimore City Government employs more than 42,000 persons. However, the majority of its black employees are relegated to the class of blue collar workers.

These are the lowest paid jobs. They are in the Sanitation Department, the Food Service and Janitorial Service Department in the Board of Education, Nurses Aids and Janitorial Departments at City Hospitals, as well as the Health Department.

Even though the above employees are 50 percent black, all of the persons in top decision making positions in these departments are white.

The employees at the Department of Social Services are about 99 percent black, that is traditional.

There are 98,408 black students enrolled in the Baltimore City Public Schools and 25,620 others. The student population in the Baltimore City Public Schools is 95 percent black.

There are 7,709 teachers, about 55 percent are black. There are 800 employees at the Baltimore City Jail. Sixty-five percent of which are black.

There are 45 City Departments and Bureaus. Seven are headed by blacks.

I have young black men and women calling me daily, looking for jobs. Some have college training, yet they say they will take anything.

As I travel incognito early in the morning visiting the unemployment agencies, they are crowded with young men looking for work.

What is going to happen in the other Baltimore in June when hundreds of students enter the job market after graduating from high school and college?

When you read the stories in the local and national papers and see the publicity on television about this International City, please turn to the next page and try to find something about the other Baltimore.

Del. TROY BRAILEY
D-40th

AFRO welcomes letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication.

PARREN J. MITCHELL

The people speak

I truly am perplexed by the national polls which show Reagan has support for his destructive programs. I am perplexed because my mail, from the 7th District, and from all over the country, gives me the exact opposite impression.

While it is true I get lots of printed cards urging me to support Reagan, most of them do not have addresses. The persons just sign a printed post card and mail it in.

Quite frankly, most members of Congress do not give as much credence to the form letter approach.

I am more impressed by the letter bearing the personal message of the person who took the time to put his own thoughts on paper, in his or her own words.

Look at the contrast. Here is the form post card, typical of many I receive.

"Dear Congressman,

"I am one of your constituents. I am 100 percent behind the program President Reagan proposed in his State of the Union message.

"I agree that the budget can't be balanced by raising taxes. Please give your full support to President Reagan's State of the Union proposal and to the Tax Limitation - Balanced Budget Amendment (H.J.Res. 350).

"I will be watching to see how you vote."

On the other hand, here are portions of letters I received Feb. 16, 1982.

1. "I must express my opinion of this man whom we have in the 'White House' He is either mentally sick, possessed of a demon, or determined to ruin (the) United States because he has the power to do so. He justly deserves impeachment.

"I am a 71-year-old regular voter, and very active in voting, voter's rights and politics since 1932 and I've never seen such an attitude."

2. "Enclosed is a copy of a letter that we have sent to our Minnesota Congressmen.

"I read with interest an Associated Press News Release from your office entitled, 'Bankruptcy Threat Seen For Small Business.' Sir, that threat is here and for many good down-to-earth people there is no longer a threat but a reality.

"Our administration should move now to preserve many good small businesses and farmers."

3. "I am writing to express my concern and disbelief over the President's Budget. I find myself wondering if the United States has given up on the needs of its people.

"I am also concerned over the Defense Department's increase and I cannot help but think there must be a war on the drawing board that we the general public have not been made aware of.

"It is my hope that you will fight for ALL HUMANE needs necessary and less for Defense."

4. "I would like to congratulate you for continuing to fight against the President's attempts to cut back funding that relates to minority business policies. Keep up the fight, you have the support of the common man."

5. This person sent me a copy of his letter to the President:

"Dear President Reagan and Staff:

"Less guns, less deficits, more butter, more security — you fools!"

Since February, 1981, I have received mail from all over the country. At first, people showed shock and surprise at what the Reagan Administration was saying and doing.

Most of those first letters ran along these lines: "I voted for Reagan, I know we need to sacrifice, but why is he making the little people make all the sacrifices?"

The next round of letters showed the hurt, the pain being inflicted upon people by the enactment of Reagan's policies.

These letters ran along these lines, "I am desperate for a job;" "My little business is being forced to close;" and "I fought for my country. Why are my benefits being cut — I just cannot make it without the benefits."

The last round of letters, beginning in September, showed real anger. You see it in the letters I quoted from.

This last quote sums it up, "This isn't a budget, it's a hit list."

G. JAMES FLEMING

Janet Cooke facing life sentence

Is Janet Cooke — the now famed or infamous news reporter, with little respect for the truth — facing a life sentence, although no judge has sentenced her to such a fate?

Will she find herself being punished forever, for most practical purposes?

And what about the other Janet Cookes and the countless James Cookes, in and out of jail?

These thoughts came to mind, again, a few weeks ago, after we had heard Janet Cooke bare herself about what made her ruin a very, very promising career and future as a journalist.

She did so by lying one time too many and, in the discovered case, lying needlessly.

We have struggled with the opening question before, time after time, whenever we have come across young men and young women who slipped one time, or even twice, and had "served time" and later found door after door closed to them, as they tried to find employment or even to rent a decent apartment.

Some of these young people were college students, some veterans who had committed some civil offense while in the military service and had been tainted by both "a record" and a dishonorable discharge.

Often, we have said to ourselves, "If society is never going to give these people a chance outside of prison, it may as well sentence them to life imprisonment. Life imprisonment without any possible commutation of sentence."

These are not days favorable for bringing up such a subject. It must be remembered, however, there are countless numbers of lawbreakers, who committed no violent crimes and just as many, too, who regardless of their crime, could be salvaged and be turned around, if the powers-that-be ever decided to invest in the kind of in-prison training that enlightened criminologists and psychologists have often recommended.

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Fortunately, before the law Janet Cooke committed no crime. She has not faced a judge. She has not served a day in jail.

However, if public reaction is indicative of what the future holds for this very attractive, dashing, skilled woman, still in her twenties, the days ahead are very bleak for her.

She also must carry the cross of having "committed treason against the proud profession of journalism."

Both in social gatherings and on a recent TV talk show, the black women in the audience were so hostile and unsympathetic.

These women of color fired apparently by the feeling Miss Cooke had "let the whole race down" and "has made it harder for others of us to get to the top."

Few seemed to remember Janet Cooke has killed nobody and she did not and does not sell death-dealing drugs to little children or to their parents.

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None of this is excusing or approving what Miss Cooke did — in constructing a colorful, well written prize-winning newspaper feature, Pulitzer Prize, no less, and in the "Washington Post," no less and passing it off as based on literal truth.

Nor can we find any grounds for explaining why she falsified how much actual formal higher education she really had earned.

Unfortunately, there are many Janet Cookes. There are many human beings who find they are not able to wait to become rich enough, or powerful enough.

There are those who are unwilling to invest the time and energy necessary to climb until they reach the top of the mountain, forgetting there is a price to pay for everything — for success and for faked success.

When reality hits them, sooner or later, as it recently has hit Janet Cooke, this price is exacted.

We hold, however, if society is not to commit another offense, the price should not be, must not be a life sentence, for all practical purposes.

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NOTE: Here in Maryland, another headline case is that of former Congressman Charles C. Diggs, Jr. He was ousted from the House of Representatives after being found guilty of a federal offense.

Now, Diggs finds he is being blocked from practicing as a funeral director in the state, although he professionally is able, and is from a family of undertakers.

Janet Cooke

ELIZABETH M. OLIVER

By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

BLACK CAUCUS PARTY

DEL. CHRISTINE M. JONES, of the 27th Legislative District Prince Georges County, replaces Del. Frank J. Kormanda who became a senator when the General Assembly opened in January.

She is the 20th member of the historic group.

DEL. JONES, very attractively frocked in red velvet, was quite a picture when the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus assembled at Martins West Wednesday night for the 4th Annual Fundraiser.

DEL. JONES becomes the fourth member of the Prince Georges County representative group: Senator Tommie Broadwater, Dels. Nathaniel Exum and Sylvania W. Woods Jr.

Del. Jones also makes the total number of women legislators add to five, a group which also includes Senator Vefda F. Welcome, Dels. Hattie Harrison, Lena K. Lee and Margaret Murphy.

WHEN LOUISE GEE MURPHY is sworn in as a senator Friday, the total number of black members of the Maryland General Assembly becomes 21.

THE MARYLAND group is therefore the largest black group in the nation.

THE CAUCUS BANQUET guest list included a cross section of the Maryland legal profession and a Who's Who such as rarely seen.

DEL. FRANK M. CONAWAY, chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus and his aides, Trudy McGowan, chairman, held a flawless affair with a splendid cocktail hour and all the trimmings and a complete soul food sit - down dinner.

SENATOR CLARENCE M. BLOUNT and Senator Clarence Mitchell III received the annual awards.

Speakers included Congressman Parren J. Mitchell and U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes.

For all we know

AMONG GUESTS were Mayor Harry Kelley of Ocean City and Mayor and Mrs. Hillman of Annapolis; Anne Arundel County Executive Bob Pascal; Judge and Mrs. William Murphy Sr.; Judge James A. Parrott and Senator John Carroll Byrnes who is to become a judge.

BRENT SNODGRASS and son Jeffrey, and Ed Snowden of Bethlehem Steel; Arie Davis, Marshall Jones, Mr. and Mrs. John Kilby, Senator and Mrs. Sarbanes, John Green deputy secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene and Ted Thornton, secretary of Personnel.

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS Clerk Saundra Banks, Dr. Mebane Turner, president of the University of Baltimore; Dr. Hok Smith, president of Towson State, former Del. George Heffner now of Washington; Del. Chester's family, Mrs. Chester, their son William and daughter and son-in - law in India and Hiawatha Watkins; Gray Reneker, Mayor Kelley's campaign director; Mrs. Bill Clowney, Mrs. Rachel Deford, Mrs. June Potter, delegate from Prince Georges County; Mrs. Enolia McMillian of the NAACP.

MRS. NORMA LINDSAY, vice chairman of the Maryland State Lottery; Leronia Ellis, HUD general consel.

MISS BERNADINE MYERS, former AFRO reporter, now an attorney for the Board of Veterans Appeals, Washington; Mrs. Mary Conaway, Dr. and Mrs. Keiffer Mitchell, City councilman Michael Bowen Mitchell and City Councilman Norman Reeves and son Norman J. Reeves III;

NORMAN BRAILEY, assistant to Sen. Sarbanes, Sen. Rosalie Abrams, Michael Callas, chairman of the Washington County Demo. Central Committee; State Troopers Bill Arrington and Johnny, Hughes and hundreds of others.

DEL. CONAWAY will lead the Maryland Black Caucus down to Georgia in a few days to join the Georgia State legislators who number 20 delegates and senators. Their mission is to help the black citizens of that small Georgia county to obtain representatives on all levels.

HISTORY NOTE

NEARLY ALL RACES of people have been taken in bondage at some time in World history. The children of Israel who were led across the Red Sea to freedom by Moses, that story is well known.

ANOTHER GROUP held in slavery is described in the book "The Slave Community" by John W. Blassingame probably the most interesting book you could ever read.

FROM THE 8th to the 19th century hundreds of thousands of Europeans were enslaved by the Arabs, Turks and West Africans.

EUROPEAN SERVITUDE to the Moslems began when Arabs from North Africa launched their campaign to conquer the Iberian Peninsular in the 13th Century.

THOUSANDS OF Europeans and Americans shipwrecked on the North and West African coasts or captured by Arab privateers at sea were also enslaved.

ESTIMATES of the number of whites enslaved range between 500,000 and 1 million.

IN ALGIERS during the 16th and 17th Centuries there were between 25,000 and 40,000 white slaves.

WHITE SLAVES serving on galleys, on public works or as bondsmen of the Sultan of Morocco or the nomadic Bedouin tribes in the the desert fared worst and had the highest mortality rates.

Sometimes the white slaves were yoked to ploughs and worked under brutal overseers and drivers. White slaves who even brushed against an Arab might be summarily beaten or killed because the Sultan considered them unclean.

HILTON PROBLEM SOLVED

DEAR AFRO:

"Now that the Bobby Burger Show episode is past, and hopefully being forgotten, the Baltimore Hilton management would like to communicate our sincere apologies to the citizens of the community, black and white.

"We intended no offense to anyone. But misunderstandings and untimely communication have created controversy and divisiveness, and this troubles us deeply. We want everyone to know that we feel very much a part of this community, and would never knowingly do anything which might bring to it disharmony and discord. Sincerely

ABRUZZI N V
Taher Abughazaleh, president

Tony Brown's Comments

Another look at black self-help

I am sure it is safe to say there are not many poor blacks who are looking forward to Reaganomics or its effects.

But short of denying reality, strict budget cuts WILL hit the nation's poor the hardest — most of whom are black — and the upcoming economic setbacks will have to be dealt with by those affected.

Solutions to the economic problems of Afro-Americans should come from a philosophy that is, first, sensitive to the needs of the black community.

One such came to my attention while preparing to film one of my documentaries.

Robert Clemons is senior economist for Economic Solutions. He now is in the process of publishing a booklet entitled, "Black Reaganomics," a well-written report which has, as a bottom line remedy to black economic survival, self-help.

Clemons also is a resource person for the Assembly Republican Task Force on Enterprise Zones and former lecturer at Brooklyn College.

In his booklet, Mr. Clemons points out the fact the effects of President Reagan's policy on blacks will, perhaps, be greater than they should be and the administration has made it clear blacks can no longer look at their problems as separate from the rest of the nation.

In identifying these problems, he refers to comments the President made about the black community's inability to turn over the dollar five or six times before it goes into the general economy.

This statement points a finger at everyone from the white suppliers to the black consumers, Clemons said.

However, he feels part of the problem stems from an attitude among blacks.

"I believe that black consumers actually demand a touch of whiteness and white affluence in their households. They try to produce a climate of so-called white culture by their household production functions," he said.

"What black people need is demand management to make sure black suppliers survive. Then, supply management provided by the administration will help black Americans approach equilibrium.

"We would be able to get that 240B dollars of consumption to economic development uses."

What this means in everyday language is because of self-hatred, blacks shy away from the services of black lawyers, black doctors, black accountants and black dentists among others.

Clemons' report goes on to stress the need for a balanced bipartisanship, politically and philosophically, among blacks.

In other words, his ideal would see blacks as 50 percent Democrat and 50 percent Republican, and in each party, 50 percent liberal and 50 percent conservative.

This, he said will "bring the question back" — more money — and allow an accurate evaluation from the community. By doing this, he believes it will reveal the conservatives are advocating self-help through the private sector to bring additional income to the community, while the liberals are advocating "handouts" or dependency through the public sector.

In addition, the former Brooklyn College economics lecturer goes on to point out equal programmes of black economic development has been impeded because of "shocks" to the black economy which ultimately increase costs to black households and firms.

This, however, should be weighed against the fact some blacks do not maximize consumption and saving targets, a major factor in which economic equilibrium is based, he said.

However, one of the most damaging factors to black economic development, as Clemons sees it, are "licensure laws" or laws set up that demand an educational or training requirement before entrepreneurs can go into the industry.

"They do this so that there is a decreased supply which automatically raises prices. Excessive prices increase profits," he said.

Economists believe the consumers should determine who stays or goes out of business. That is the right of market through households, not government," Clemons said.

But in assessing the real problem among black consumers, Clemons point to black buying habits and the repercussions occurring from them.

Firstly, he said blacks overconsume products or buy more than necessary with a two-week paycheck. The obvious drawback here is the amount of money available for saving is less when you buy four weeks worth of a product for a two-week period.

Secondly, the attitude of self-hatred buying — buying from whites because one believes black businesses have inferior products — creates what he calls a dearth of first string black entrepreneurs who flee their community because of bankruptcy and end up in a white community or sheltered in a large white corporation.

Yet the sad result for all concerned, he points out, is who ultimately gets short-changed.

"If you don't patronize a black entrepreneur, that black entrepreneur can not hire your teenagers after school, during the summer or any other time you need the money," Clemons said.

"One must remember this especially when the public sector will not hire the teenager or when checks from the public sector are decreased or eliminated," he said.

If you would like further information on this subject, write: Robert Clemons, Economic Solutions, 115 E. 87 St., suite 17B, New York, NY 10028.

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TONY BROWN'S JOURNAL, the television series, can be seen on public television, Mon., on Channel 22 at 10:30 pm. It also can be seen on channel 67, Mon., at 10:30 pm. Please consult listings

More letters

Honor to Janet Cooke?

DEAR AFRO:

I recently saw the Phil Donahue Show Feb. 12 about sister Janet Cooke, who was being commended and also spoke about in the AFRO Feb. 6.

I would like to shed some light on this situation. A lie can only proceed from truth, and falsehood is truth reversed.

One of the greatest books of the world teaches, "Judge not another because you will be judged," and if you do judge let your judgement be right.

I ask every one of you, have you not told a lie before? A small lie or greater lie, a serious lie, or a joking lie, the fact is, a lie is a lie!

But as I said at first, "a lie proceeds from truth, so I ask you out of sister Cooke's story was there ANY TRUTH?

I deem there was, because there are little Jimmys running around everyday involved with drugs, maybe not heroin but a drug is a drug.

Yes, she told a lie and she told the truth, why? Because it does exist. Just as there was some bad in this situation there also was some good from her article.

Before this sister-woman, who is being commended awoke the conscious of our people, the reality was no concern. Now that Jimmy does not exist per se how many of you can truthfully say Jimmy's characteristic does not exist in our communities? Therefore I give honor to sister Janet Cooke for waking our people and it matter not the scale our people up again, who have fallen back to sleep such as Rip Van Winkle, then tell a lie because a lie may make some see the truth.

JOHNNY HOWARD-BEY

National holiday due Martin Luther King

Dear AFRO:

Although Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, January 15, has come and gone, it is fitting we all continue to work to see to it that his birthday becomes a federal holiday.

The reason is Dr. King, in his 39 years of life, did as much and perhaps more than many whom we honor today.

He was a magnificent speaker whose words have impressed and motivated all Americans. As the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize at age 35, he has been the youngest person to date to receive this honor.

He had a Ph.D. degree and was the recipient of at least 40 honorary degrees. His face appeared on all major magazines, and he was recognized as a leader all over the world.

More than anything else, Dr. King practiced what he preached. As he said time of saying, "There are some things so dear and so precious that they are worth dying for, and if a man has not discovered something worth dying for, he is not fit to live."

Dr. King gave his life so others could live. We should urge our congressmen and also our senators and the President, to make Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a national holiday — not because he is black, but because he was a great American who believed all men and women should be equally treated and respected.

Dr. King and his works will live as a testimonial of man's ability to rise to new heights and work for the betterment of his fellow man. Dr. King will forever remain a symbol of what is best in humankind.

As we work every day to make his birthday a national holiday, so perhaps the words he was fond of quoting, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal," will one day become a reality.

Those men living or dead, have contributed in such a humane and positive way to the betterment and improvement of American life and the human spirit. Dr. Martin Luther King deserves to have his birthday proclaimed a national holiday.

JOHN A. MICKLOS

AFRO article stirs National Guard memories

DEAR AFRO:

Your Feb. 13, edition brings back memories of my active part from 1960 to 1965 in the 231st Transportation Battalion and the 229th Transportation Battalion of the Maryland National Guard.

Col. Box Harris was my Commanding Officer and Col. Melvin Cade was our leader.

I do remember the showing of soldiering in 1960 when we went to Fort Bragg, NC. All eyes were on us for track maintenance, neatness and soldiering.

The day of the parade, we were proud when our history was read as we passed in review parades.

I was a member of the 369th Infantry 93 Division stationed at Fort Huchuca, Ariz. I remember AFRO reporter Art Carter when he was in the Philippines.

I was getting the AFRO-American even though sometimes late, but good news to my company, as most of the men were from the deep south and had never heard of the AFRO or the Pittsburgh Courier.

This was a great help to them to learn about the black race.

As a boy I used to go to the Fourth Regiment Armory to see the soldiers drill. I remember the band as they were our pride and joy in parades.

I joined the 231st when they came back from Korea. I was working at Edgewood Arsenal at the time. I now am retired from the Social Security Administration — 37 years. I see many of the men who I soldiered with, especially Sgt. Lloyd Scott who still serves and Col. Box Harris.

ROBERT A. DENNISON, JR.