SPEAK OUT

What should the NAACP be doing—today, tomorrow?

The 64 members of the NAACP National Board of Directors this week received this questionnaire by express mail from Dr. Benjamin Hooks, NAACP executive director, asking them to give input on:

- What is needed to complete the unfinished civil rights agenda?
- What should be the NAACP's major program thrust?
- What should be the NAACP's priorities?
- What should be the cost involved? and
- What should be the evaluation criteria?

Frances L. Murphy II, a member of the NAACP national board and also a member of the Board of Directors of the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper Co., would like to include opinions from AFRO readers in her answers to these questions.

Ms. Murphy said that many readers have complained about what the NAACP is not doing. Now, they have an opportunity to help the NAACP do its comprehensive long-range planning. Address all replies to: The AFRO NAACP Questionnaire, 628 N. Eutaw Street, Baltimore, Md. 21201.

Readers are invited to reply to all questions or just one or two. Speak out today. Deadline for receiving letters is Nov. 10.

Use a separate sheet for your answers with the appropriate number beside each item.

NAACP COMPREHENSIVE LONG-RANGE PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE 1985-2000

INTRODUCTION

As we approach the 21st Century, the task ahead for the nation's oldest and largest civil rights Association is to complete the unfinished civil rights agenda; weigh the plight of American blacks, and develop a comprehensive, accelerated organizational thrust in light of present and anticipated barriers to full equality.

For 75 years, the NAACP has carried out effective programs for social and economic improvements. Today in this present climate, when the commitment to national action is virtually non-existent, we are calling a long-range planning conference to examine our programs, our directions, our priorities.

We know that the NAACP's objective has been and remains a totally integrated society. But how will this best be achieved today? What is happening? How can we effectively meet these present day challenges?

Since the Federal Government is not giving priority to any national action programs designed to improve a worsening situation, we believe it is essential for the NAACP to redouble its efforts.

Many Americans, black and white believe that the problems of inequality have been solved. Others lack confidence that the system can be changed.

Black Americans have made some gains. Yet much remains to be done. More than 40 percent of black Americans live in poverty. Blacks are unemployed at twice the rate of white Americans. Blacks are more likely to be ill-fed, ill-housed and ill-clothed.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People must continue to make its voice heard on all issues of concern to the black community. Fiscal and human resources, however, dictate that in order to maintain its effectiveness, the Association must prioritize its program thrusts.

I. GENERAL

1. Given the assumption that the Association's basic challenges is "to make things happen" to cure the many social ills plaguing black Americans, how can the NAACP maximize its capacity nationally and locally to effect social change for the benefit of the black community?

2. Should the Association expand its current civil rights program; maintain its current program without change; move into a non-traditional civil rights thrust to tackle non-civil rights problems of the black community, or use a combination of thrusts?

— Maintain its traditional civil rights thrust (Yes/No)
— Expand its current program thrust (Yes/No)
— Move into non-traditional civil rights areas (Yes/No)

If yes, please explain. If no, what programs do you propose the NAACP discontinue?

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A. EDUCATION

The Supreme Court in **Brown V. Board of Education** noted that "education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments..."

In 1985, 31 years after BROWN v BOARD OF EDUCATION, a third of the nation's black children are still being educated in virtually all black schools.

1. **School integration:** As we continue our thrust to desegregate public education.

— Should we broaden our approach?
— Should we emphasize out-of-court settlements?
— Can we negotiate?
— What other alternatives may be considered?

Please state your reasons.

2. **Access to Equal Education:** How can we widen access to equal education for black children?

— What is your definition of equal education?

3. **Testing:** For black youth, should Test Preparation Programs be a priority?

Please state your reasons.

For our teachers, how do we approach an educational system which gives greater priority to test performance than competency on the job?

Should we develop a special program designed to assist black teachers?

Please state your reasons.

4. **Black Athletes:** Should the same academic performance standards be required of them as of other students?

Should there be some established form of financial compensation?

If so, what should be the criteria?

Please state your reasons.

B. EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment, the by-product of an ailing economy, has had a disproportionate impact on the black community. Black unemployment has consistently remained twice that of whites — 18.9 percent in 1982 compared with 8.6 percent for whites. The purchasing power of median income of black families in 1980 was only slightly lower than it was a decade earlier in 1970. Over the last 20 years, the proportion of the black male population in **the labor force** declined steadily from 83 percent in 1960 to 71 percent in 1980 when less than three-fourths (¾ths) of the black male population were even in the labor force.

Black youth unemployment is a national disgrace.

How should the NAACP tackle the unemployment problem?

Should the Association resources be used to secure governmnt — local, state and federal funds to strengthen job-related education in fields such as office automation, vocational and technical education? (Yes/No)

Why?

Should the NAACP continue to fight for and monitor affirmative action programs? (Yes/No)

If yes, what percentage of the Association's resources should be used on this program thrust? Why?

Should the NAACP use economic demonstrations, boycotts and withdrawals of consumer support to pressure companies into the inclusion of blacks at all levels of employment, vendor utilization, as well as to encourage them to use black banks and other financial institutions? (Yes/No)

Unemployment and underemployment among blacks are critical problems, partially occurring because blacks are not trained to participate in the technology-based workplace. Should the NAACP add the training of blacks in communities throughout the nation as part of its programmatic thrust? (Yes/No)

Economic Development

Is there a role for the NAACP in helping to develop black business opportunities? (Yes/No)

Why?

Should the NAACP provide resources and/or support services to small black businesses? Give reasons for your response.

C. THE BLACK FAMILY

Persistent inflation and a stagnant economy have taken their toll on American families, and again, black families are the hardest hit. Black unemployment was 18.9 percent in 1982 compared to 8.6 percent for whites. 1972 rates were 10.3 percent for blacks compared to 5 percent for whites. Teenage black unemployment for blacks reached crisis proportions of 48 percent in 1982 compared with 20.4 percent for white teenagers.

Black families have always earned less than white families. In 1971 the median family income for all black families was 56 percent ($13,270) of the median income for white families ($23,520). By 1981, **43 percent of black Americans had incomes of $10,000 or less.** Seventy percent of all poor black families were headed by families in 1981 as contrasted to 56 percent in 1970.

In 1982, eighty-one (81%) percent of white children lived with both parents compared with 41% of black children. More than one-half of births to black women (55%) occurred out of wedlock in 1980 (the last compiled data) compared with 11 percent for whites. Public policy created additional problems for families locked in the unemployment cycle in that many welfare systems would not provide aid to families with dependent children if an adult male was in the home.

Site of the new NAACP Baltimore headquarters

URBAN PROGRAMS

Eighty percent of the black population now live in urban areas. Despite continuing growth in the black middle class, blacks are increasingly impoverished, unemployed and underemployed. Today the disparity in income between blacks and whites is as great as it was 25 years ago. This has been accomplished by the breakdown of the traditional American family structure which has become one of the most serious problems facing the black family today. In view of this, in 1984, the NAACP convened the Black Family Summit.

Should the NAACP shift some of its resources to develop programs to strengthen and improve the condition of the black family?

The NAACP has an Urban Program in New Jersey designed to provide NAACP Branches with full-time professional assistance for coordinating and stimulating activities by volunteers in meeting needs of the local black communities.

Should this program be continued and expanded? Why?

Should an Urban Program be developed to include specific problems experienced by the black family?

If yes, should any of these issues be included?

— Jobs and Economic Security for black families
— Education and black families
— Housing, transportation and energy costs and their impact on black families
— Patterns of child rearing and socialization
—Crime, violence and black families:
— Single parent families
— The black aged
— Male/female relations in black families
— Healthy black families

Or, alternatively, should the NAACP develop a program to do any of the following:

— Provide information for low income people about sources for employment, education, housing, health care and other needs
— Actively stimulate the support of public and private institutions for the sponsorship of funded programs
— Serve as a clearinghouse for information pertaining to Urban Programs and the black family

Please state your reasons.

D. HEALTH

There is a historical disparity between the health status of blacks as compared to that of whites. According to the 1985 Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health:

- Black Americans have the highest overall rate of both incidence and morality of any population group in the United States.
- Blacks have a marked excess of hypertension
- The prevalence of diabetes is significantly greater in blacks than among whites
- The infant mortality rate in 1982 was 19.6 per 1,000 live births for blacks as contrasted with 10.1 for whites.

1. What should be the Association's role, if any, as regards health issues in the black communiy? Please be specific.

2. Should NAACP resources be used in sponsored community education programs about diseases that disproportionately affect blacks, e.g., hypertension, cancer, etc.? (Yes/No)

Explain your response.

Should the NAACP be involved in programs concerned with prenatal care of pregnant teenagers?

Should the NAACP be concerned with hospitalization costs, Medicaid and Medicare-provided assistance to the elderly poor?

E. HOUSING

Black Americans are still denied equal access to housing. Although a Fair Housing Act was passed in 1968 followed by the Housing and Community Development Acts of 1974, 1977 and 1980, the nation has been slow to provide an adequate supply of decent, affordable housing for low income families.

Low income families, often paying more than 50 percent (50 percent) of their income for shelter, are being displaced as a result of neighborhood revitalization, regentrification and the demolition and abandonment of housing in the inner city.

The Reagan Administration has abdicated its responsibility to enforce Title VIII of the Fair Housing Act although the Federal government's role is fundamental in the effective enforcement of civil rights laws.

A massive 1979 HUD investigation, updated in 1984, shows that racial discrimination is widespread in the sale or rental of housing.

1. Should the NAACP press for expanded housing and press for and document the critical need for federal housing assistance for lower income families, particularly black female households that cannot be met in the existing market? (Yes/No)

2. Should local branches engage in "testing" for discriminatory rental, sales and financing techniques to secure documentation of discrimination to transmit to the appropriate federal agencies? (Yes/No)

3. Is there a need to reactive the NAACP Housing Department given limited resources? (Yes/No)

4. Should the NAACP allocate resources to desegregate public housing projects? If so, what percentage of Association resources should be allotted? (Yes/No)

5. Given the availability of housing, should the NAACP work to obtain access for blacks in the newer developments coming on the market in the private sector? (If yes, why? If no, state your reasons. (Yes/No)

6. Should the NAACP stimulate or encourage provision by state or municipal government of new or rehabilitated housing for low and lower middle income families? (If yes, why. If no, state your reasons. (Yes/No)

F. SOUTH AFRICA

The NAACP has a long-standing policy position as regards South Africa. During the past ten years, the Policy has been emphasized by a National March against the Davis Cup matches in Nashville, picketing the South African Consulate in New York and other cities; calling for divestment in South Africa; participation in the Free South African movement.

1. How should the NAACP implement its policies on South Africa?

2. Should there be a major allocation of human resources to implement the Association's policies against apartheid in South Africa? (If yes, why. If no, state your reasons.) (Yes/No)

G. LEGAL DEPARTMENT

The NAACP has placed a great deal of its resources in litigation with specific emphasis on school desegregation, employment, housing and voting rights. In the 1970's a major focus was on school desegregation targeting Michigan and Ohio. Redistricting and reapportionment, after the 1980 Census triggered a number of legal initiatives in voting rights.

The erosive actions of the Reagan Administration in the area of civil and economic rights threatens the already strained fiscal and human resources of the Association.

- The government has moved away from the bringing of class action lawsuits;
- The Department of Justice has launched an all-out attack on affirmative action — the use of numerical goals and timetables in hiring and promotion and has sought changes in orders and consent decrees in more than 50 jurisdictions;
- The Justice Department has negatively intervened in school desegregation efforts and enunciated that it would not seek to have children go to schools they did not wish to attend.

It is beyond Association resources to tackle the universe to protect our gains and pursue new initiatives in the many areas of black community life.

1. Should litigation continue to be a major Association thrust? (Yes/No)

2. **Should there be a major allocation of human resources to implement the Association's policies against apartheid in South Africa? (If yes, why. If no, state your reasons.)** (Yes/No)

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