

Part 1



BLACK LABOR

The Search for Power and Economic Justice

WHITE WEALTH



Claud Anderson, Ed.D.

BLACK LABOR, WHITE WEALTH

The Search for Power
and
Economic Justice

Claud Anderson, Ed.D.

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Dedication

*For My Youngest Brother, John Wesley,
Who I Love With All My Being.
I Will Always Keep In My Heart His Laughter,
Creative Spirit, Warmth and Caring Ways.*

Acknowledgments

I must give special acknowledgment to my wife, Joann and my children Paige and Brant, for their inspiration, advice and unwavering support. I am also grateful to the many friends who encouraged me to write a book of this nature and supported my effort. They willingly and unwillingly engaged in endless discussions to help me analyze the complex racial issues that I explore in this book.

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Foreword

It is not often that people of Dr. Claud Anderson's stature will take the risk of stepping out from the pack. However, his book *Black Labor, White Wealth*, breaks away from the pack. Dr. Anderson has written in a straight forward manner about the sensitive issues of race and ethnicity in America.

Many blacks and far too many whites still believe that blacks contributed little or nothing to the creation of wealth and power in this country. Dr. Anderson forcefully proves the contrary. Of course, there are many people who have heard of the cotton gin or blood plasma (as though these were the only important creations of blacks), but few people of the world know of the historic economic and monetary contributions of black folk. *Black Labor, White Wealth* shows how the labor of black men and women from days of slavery to the present helped to lay the wealth building foundation for this country.

One would think that such a feat would be enough for one book, but Dr. Anderson didn't stop there. **He was bold enough to ask and then answer the \$64,000 question:** Since blacks originated from one of the oldest civilizations, why are blacks still so far behind economically as compared to whites and other immigrants? Again, Dr. Anderson reveals startling information! His examination of the methods whites used (and still use) to gain wealth and power provides examples of ways that blacks can adopt to build bases of wealth and power throughout the country. This book is provocative and powerful!

Tony Brown
Tony Brown's Journal

Introduction

Racism against black people has been a virulent undercurrent in our society for hundreds of years. In various forms, it insinuates itself into all aspects of our lives. Yet, it is not an acceptable topic for discussion anywhere, neither the conference room nor the living room, especially across racial lines. It is as if we believe that if we ignore the facts of racism, they will not exist. That is not the reality. It is time for a serious dialogue and a change in black strategies.

Neither the dialogue nor the strategies can be emotional or superficial. Instead, they must be based on facts and knowledge and considered for the purpose of understanding, not just the symptoms that we see all around us, but also how things came to be as they are and how as blacks we can reverse our misfortunes and strengthen ourselves as a racial group.

It is critical that we strengthen our group, because while as individuals some of us may hold high-ranking positions in corporate America, government agencies and our own businesses, and some of us may reside far from the scenes of black despair, all blacks are identifiable members of one racial group. Furthermore, as a racial group, we are powerless, impoverished and increasingly unable to compete in America. And whether they intend to or not, those outside of our group see us as one group.

The predominantly marginal living conditions of black America did not happen by accident. They resulted from much forethought and planning by whites. European whites who came to this country in 1607 were the first power group in America. They wielded power in a manner that is natural to

the human race. They had a chance to start a new government in a country filled with resources and potential for wealth. They seized a unique opportunity to structure a government and a system to their sole advantage. To secure their advantage and increase their power, they subordinated and exploited another race of people — blacks.

The purpose of this book is to illuminate and examine the strategies and techniques that were used by whites to accomplish their goal of solidifying power and privilege. Once black Americans understand the strategies and techniques that whites used to build their power, they can use those same tools to build black empowerment.

The history of slavery and the struggles for equality serve as a guide for the future. While the dire conditions of black Americans can be traced back to measures that colonial governments used against blacks, it does not end there. We have further handicapped ourselves by some of our own beliefs and behaviors. Our dogged pursuit of integration is one example. In so doing, we have destroyed our communities, diluted our numerical strength and become dependent upon others. We have been further handicapped by our inability to practice group economics in a capitalistic democracy.

We have always been a key capitalistic element in the national empowerment plans of others — as a source of free or cheap labor. Yet, we have never had a national empowerment plan of our own. We have never used our collective intellectual resources to create a national plan with explicit policies and strategies for our own economic and political gain. *Black Labor, White Wealth* provides useful information and a conceptual framework to stimulate thought, discussion and planning toward that end.

Chapter One describes and analyzes the present day conditions of black America and establishes links with the antebellum condition of slaves. Chapter Two discusses concepts of power and focuses on the ways groups acquire and institutionalize power. Chapter Three describes the social and economic impediments to black empowerment, including certain behavior patterns and ideological beliefs that diffuse and weaken our sense of direction and unity. Chapters Four and Five explain why blacks were selected for enslavement and why we cannot change our conditions by emulating Asians, Hispanics or other ethnic and racial groups that immigrated into this country.

Chapter Six tracks the nature and development of black-white relationships in connection with the wealth-building process. Using comparative tables, charts, illustrations, drawings and visual timelines, this chapter covers five

centuries of social practices and devices that created wealth and power imbalances between blacks and whites. Chapter Seven explains the national public policy that has guided institutions in their manipulative use of blacks. The conditioning and supportive systems for controlling and keeping blacks a powerless minority are also discussed.

Chapter Eight explains why certain major problems will converge within the next generation to make blacks a permanent underclass, unless black Americans take immediate preventive actions to avoid this catastrophe. To that end, Chapter Eight offers practical courses of action that blacks can take to achieve community cohesiveness, change detrimental social-psychological behavior patterns and to develop a new type of leadership that will help black America develop itself into a competitive group in a rapidly developing pluralistic society.

Finally, Chapter Nine describes the concept of building vertical businesses or structuring a system of businesses around an area of black dominance, such as the music industry. This chapter also includes discussion of sports, another area where blacks have a strong dominance, which, if properly leveraged, could create vertical business opportunities.

Some readers may think this book is too pessimistic, because it doesn't pay homage to the positive aspects of black-white relationships. Others may question a book on black history that does not highlight the individual successes of black people. But such black achievements have been recognized and discussed by many other writers. This book breaks new ground by offering a hard and honest look at how to best resolve a 400-year-old problem that black and white, conservatives and liberals would like to wish away or bury beneath debates on less complex issues, such as abortion, sexual harassment, or a balanced budget amendment. *Black Labor, White Wealth* is written to re-engage the reader emotionally and intellectually in the profoundly unresolved black/white race issue.

The purpose of this book is not to criticize any group of people, but to analyze history and propose a reasonable solution. All too frequently, blacks are admonished to forget slavery. But to do so would be foolhardy especially at this time, because the major problems facing black America are rooted in slavery. Thus, we must squarely face that tragedy and learn from it, lest we be doomed to be shackled by it *forever*.

Dr. Claud Anderson

The Nature of the Problem

*"It isn't that they can't see the solution.
It is that they can't see the problem."¹*

The Los Angeles, California riot had subsided, but the acrid smell of burned wood and tar still hung heavy in the early morning air. A local television reporter scanned the crowd and spotted a familiar black community activist standing by a burned-out grocery store. Sensing a good sound bite, the reporter asked for an interview. The bright lights came on and the reporter began:

Three decades after the Civil Rights Movement transformed the nation, why is the black community dissatisfied? Why have they rioted and destroyed their own neighborhood? What is the problem?"

The activist cocked his head and in a voice mixed with anger and indignation, responded, "Surely, the gains of the Civil Rights Movement in the '60s were important, but they turned out to be superficial and largely symbolic. We can sit at lunch counters and vote, but economically, civil rights gains took more from us than they gave. Some blacks got important big-paying jobs in white businesses or government. Sure, we have our Colin Powells and Oprahs, but the black masses were left behind. So,

you see, integration came at the expense of the black community. Now things are worse than ever.

We have more killings and crime, more school dropouts and drug users. Integration killed our communities. We have no black economic structure to solve the problems of our community. Our black churches and families are weak and struggling. We have yet to gain control of our communities and our destinies. The Vietnamese, Koreans, Indians, Iranians and Mexicans are putting up profitable businesses in our neighborhoods. And we are still hopelessly vulnerable to every danger — from police brutality to violence and poverty. The next time we go to the Supreme Court, instead of integration, maybe we should seek ‘separate but equal.’”

The white newscaster forced a smile and said, “But, with all the civil rights laws and blacks who have been elected to public office, surely things are better for blacks. What happened to the dream that Dr. King spoke of so eloquently more than 20 years ago?”

Exasperated, the activist shook his head and walked away. At home he waited for his interview to appear on the evening news. He had tried to explain the causes of black peoples’ pain, confusion, disappointment and anger. He cursed himself for not talking about black peoples’ tiredness. How tired they were of being the world’s underdog. Even so, he hoped the world would be watching and listening. As the riot coverage aired on television, he saw close-up shots of the faces of distressed blacks. Looters scrambled in the background. He heard an elected official saying now was the time for healing and a coming together among blacks and whites.

He watched, but his interview never aired. The words of the reporter played again and again in his head, “Surely things are better for blacks.”

As the black activist pushed the off button on his television set, a chipper weatherman concluded the news, “Sunny skies tomorrow.”

The Problem and Its Root

The newscaster’s assumption is shared by millions of Americans. We ask each other what has gone wrong in the black community? What’s wrong with blacks? Why can’t they act like other ethnic or racial groups in America? Talk shows seek the answers from leading black personalities, who, when asked about the problems of black America, mouth well-worn platitudes. Perhaps they are fearful of raising the ire of mainstream America or perhaps they are simply naive.

Nevertheless, the solutions these blacks urge address only the symp-

toms afflicting black America, not the causes. The root of the problem within black America is not teenage pregnancy, drugs, the decline in family values, anger, rap music, unemployment or even the epidemic of violent crime. These are only symptoms of the deeper problem.

The root problem in black communities across America is race and the unjust distribution of our nation's wealth, power and resources. One race, the descendents of white Europeans, seemingly has checkmated blacks' efforts to improve themselves. Whites live in privileged conditions, with nearly 100 percent ownership and control of the nation's wealth, power, businesses and all levels of government support and resources. White society has a monopoly of ownership and control.

This monopoly of control resulted directly from centuries of abusive exploitation and expropriation of the labor of a darker race, black Americans of African descent. Though black Americans reside in the richest nation on earth, their standard of living is comparable to that of a Third World nation. Blacks own and control less than two percent of the wealth, power and resources of the nation, so they have little control over their lives and the conditions in which they are forced to live.

Both the disparity between white and black living conditions and inequitable allocation of resources are centuries-old problems. They are a major legacy of the "peculiar institution" called slavery. It was that social system that a white patriarchal society consigned blacks to live in the most inhumane conditions, doing the harshest labor, without just compensation. The dominant white society felt that by stripping the black slave of his humanity, all of his worldly possessions, his personal freedom, and keeping him hopeless that blacks would be forever non-competitive and powerless. Needless to say, the dominant society's experiment in social engineering worked.

The living conditions of a people, enslaved or free, tend to reflect their status and power within the larger society. Conditions in black America are no more or less than what was planned for them centuries ago. Solomon Northrup, a free black who was kidnapped into slavery, but later escaped, described the living standards of slaves in 1841 as befitting beasts of the field. He wrote about extraordinarily dehumanizing conditions that stripped slaves of their individuality, their labor and often their lives.

Slaves lived in dilapidated, damp, dark cabins, and their worldly possessions consisted of a few rags. A small board and a stick of wood, served as their beds and pillows. There were no physical, financial, nor psychological comforts for them, and worst of all, slaves were intention-

ally kept without hope. A slave's life was committed to producing wealth and comfort for white masters.² The slaves suffered in silence, but routinely asked in their prayers and work songs, "When will life get better for us, Lord?" Their descendants collectively still await an answer.

Legal and extra-legal measures were taken to keep both the free blacks, like the slaves, in a dependent state and excluded from enjoying the fruits of a nation that their labor was building. Free blacks were forced to survive or perish off of the marginal resources that extended into their communities. **One of the first lessons that free blacks learned was that without money and power, freedom for a black-skinned person was freedom in theory only.** They were still bound by their conditions and non-white skin color. The larger society kept them bound by making black skin color a badge of inferiority and degradation. Blacks who escaped the plantations were not permitted to escape the boundaries of their own flesh. **In reality, the socioeconomic conditions for blacks outside of slavery were only slightly better than those within the slavery system.**

Being free for a black person meant being quasi-free. A black was free as long as he could prove he was free. And even then he had only a marginally greater choice concerning how he lived compared to his enslaved brethren. In 1841, while Solomon Northrup lamented the terrible conditions of more than four million black slaves, approximately 386,290 quasi-free blacks throughout the North were being subjected to "Jim Crow" practices, a multiplicity of local ordinances and social sanctions that prohibited them from sharing fully in an affluent American society. They were forced to survive in poverty and social decay. In the shadows of the American dream, blacks' freedom was little more than a cruel and sadistic joke.

Local ordinances and social sanctions in the North and South restricted free blacks from earning competitive incomes (See the Appendix). Their labor was sold for just barely above the cost of slave labor. Without sufficient income, few were able to secure decent food, health care, or housing. They remained legally free but sought safe havens in large urban areas in the North, such as Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and Boston. The free black populations in and around these or any other large cities rarely exceeded two percent of the total population. These blacks lived off low quality food and had few worldly possessions.

According to Leonard P. Curry, author of *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850*, more than a third of the black population in cities like Boston lived in blind alleys, cellars and lofts. Their poor and unsani-

tary living conditions created rampant health problems and shortened their life spans. Curry further stated that in 1855 Boston's City Register, Dr. Josiah Curtis found that the death rate among blacks was 99 times higher than whites'.³ Today, 150 years later, the mortality gap between whites and blacks has narrowed only a little. Social pathology and inferior living conditions, not genetics, continue to control the life expectancy of blacks.

In the mid-1800s the living conditions for free blacks were so desperate that nearly 50 percent had no choice but to seek some form of public welfare. In order to survive, large numbers of blacks publicly acknowledged that they were in a helpless state and were incapable of feeding, protecting, sheltering and educating themselves and their children. Many black families became so desperate that they voluntarily re-entered slavery to survive. Others turned to public charity.

But nearly every black who sought some form of public relief was refused. They were chastised for being uneducated and were called lazy and irresponsible for bearing children that they could not support. Curry indicates that in Cincinnati, a typical northern urban area, out of 3,269 cases in which the city granted relief to the needy only 10 recipients were black. And the assistance offered these fortunate black recipients was only for their own burial expenses.

Public assistance tended to be distributed to whites only, including able-bodied male immigrants, while aid was denied to black widows with small children.⁴ With the exception of a small number of abolitionists, dominant society was indifferent to the living conditions of free blacks. Rather than blaming white racism and slavery, white society blamed blacks for their conditions, even though the conditions were not unique to Cincinnati or Boston.

Similar horrendous conditions existed throughout the North and eventually gave rise to what became urban black ghettos that symbolized the conditions of blacks. The Emancipation Proclamation and subsequent Constitutional Amendments legally freed all blacks and granted them citizenship, but without social and economic resources these newly granted rights amounted to little more than paper rights.

The government refused to compensate blacks for their prolonged servitude by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to transition from a dependent labor class to independent, competitive citizens. Instead of aiding blacks, whites expected and urged the newly freed slaves to fend for themselves. They could work, seek public assistance, steal, or disappear.

No different in S.A. NB!

Since free blacks could not find work, were denied public assistance and often could not leave the country, they had no choice but to accept what the dominant society offered them: sharecropping, which was only but another form of servitude controlled by white plantation owners.

No Light at the End of the Tunnel

UBI! { One hundred and thirty years after slavery, American society has become more pluralistic and competitive, but blacks' marginal conditions remain relatively unchanged. In some respects, they have worsened. The socioeconomic inequalities that existed between whites and blacks during and shortly after slavery are now structural.

For example, on the eve of the Civil War, records indicated that more than 50 percent of free blacks were paupers; all free blacks collectively held less than one-half of one percent of the nation's wealth, with wealth being defined as a great quantity of money or valuable goods or resources within both the private and public sectors. A century later, in the 1960s, an era considered by many as "great decade of progress for blacks," more than 55 percent of all the blacks in America were still impoverished and below the poverty line. And, blacks barely held one percent of the nation's wealth. According to the 1990 Census, approximately 40 percent of all black families are receiving public assistance and the number is increasing, with more than 56 percent of all black female-headed households beneath the poverty level.

Black unemployment has not significantly improved, in comparative terms, over the last century. According to Curry, an historian, black unemployment exceeded 40 percent in the 1850s. The National Urban League's (NUL) 1992 State of Black America Report differed with the U.S. government figures indicating that the hidden and true unemployment rate is approximately 28 percent for black adults and nearly 55 percent for black youth.

The NUL's discomfort index further indicated that black unemployment worsened between 1960 and 1990, while economic conditions for white society improved. Blacks' lack of progress was reflected in the fact that blacks earned 53 percent of what whites earned in 1948. In the 1990s, after nearly 50 years of civil rights activities and affirmative action programs, blacks earn 59 percent of what whites earn. Further, the 1990 Census indicated that black per capita net worth is \$9,359 versus \$44,980 for whites.⁵

Like their ancestors, blacks today have the same set of options. And they still lack employment opportunities in public jobs or black businesses, because most white businesses are inaccessibly in the suburbs. They still are denied or expunged from public assistance rolls. And they have yet to learn how to disappear. Many blacks have turned to crime. They are therefore criminalized in order to seek sustenance and wealth. And, just as in the previous centuries, blacks continue to be disproportionately represented in the prison system.

Curry indicated that in 1850, for example, blacks constituted 60 percent of all persons incarcerated in Maryland and half of them were under 16 years of age. During the same time period, in the states of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, blacks made up more than 50 percent of the prison populations. Today's prison rolls show similar percentages of blacks. Approximately 38 percent of all black males in America are either in prison, on parole or probation. Still, they are luckier than many of their counterparts, who annually fall victim to the homicide crisis, which each year claims more lives than the total number of American soldiers killed in either the Korean or Vietnam Wars.

In the final analysis, black America remains trapped in a dire dilemma. Some organizations have tried to call the nation's attention to the plight of blacks. In 1990, a five-year report by the National Research Council (NRC), a Washington-based research organization, indicated that the infinitesimal social and economic gains that blacks made during the 1950s and 1960s largely ended in the 1970s. *The Washington Post*, in June 1990 summarized the study reporting: "There has been no significant black progress for the last 20 years and a great socioeconomic gulf now separates blacks from European and other ethnic groups in America." Unfortunately, the NRC study received little media coverage or public response, even from black civil rights organizations.

Most blacks are concerned about what is happening in their communities and to their race, even if the media and the power structure are not. They actively participate in the political process and complain to their elected representatives about the worsening conditions, but the political system seems unable to stimulate change. Harold Cruse, a black historian, believes that among those who do care about the black problem, "Nothing is being done, because no one knows what to do about it."⁶

Considering the magnitude of black America's impoverished and powerless state, Cruse is probably right. But, why is it that society does not know what to do? Is it that the leaders of this society lack the knowledge

NB! or resources to solve the problems of black America? Or is it that they lack the incentive and commitment to create viable means for blacks to empower themselves as a group? Why should this nation's leaders do something to address the fundamental problems affecting blacks? The answer is simple. The United States' superiority among the industrial and agricultural world powers was achieved because of the exploitation of blacks. This exploitation established and now maintains a privileged racial class whose wealth and power explains and legitimizes the system's inequalities. Wealthy, conservative whites control both public and private sector resources and tools that have kept blacks impoverished and powerless in a racially competitive society.

Conservative Forces: The Bane of Black Society

Conservative social forces are the protectors of the status quo and the "good ole days." After using government to amass wealth, power and resources, conservative white power structures have long espoused sociopolitical policies that reflect their "pull up the gangplank" mentality. Powerful white conservatives profess commitment to capitalism and insist that wealth stays in the hands of the private, wealthy class, which has most benefited from the inequalities in the system.⁷ They rigidly oppose any societal changes regarding race and resources. This places them in direct opposition to and in conflict with blacks.

NB! Conservatism, of course, comes from the root word to conserve or hold on to what one has. In essence, the conservative attitude towards blacks is, "If you do not have it, we are not going to let you get it." When considering what should be done for black people, conservatives have espoused a role and solution for blacks that has not changed an iota since the country was founded. Conservatives believe in a natural ordering of human beings and have always preferred that blacks play a servile role in society.

In many ways, white liberal policies have been as injurious to blacks as those of conservatives. Neither the liberals nor the conservatives have offered any programs or resources for improving the overall socioeconomic condition of blacks. While conservatives have consistently sought to sink blacks' ship, liberals have simply rearranged the deck chairs on the sinking ship, so that blacks would be more comfortable.

Conservatives and liberals have historically approached black issues differently. Compared to ambiguous liberal approaches, conservatism is

typically straightforward concerning the issue of race. It is not difficult to uncover conservative intentions in programs and public policies. Conservatives boldly proclaim that their positions reflect the sentiments of mainstream society as well as the principles of the first European settlers, who established a self-serving system that made it easy for them to hoard wealth and power. It is this imbalance that conservatives seek to conserve. They frequently say that blacks are poor because they have unacceptable attitudes and behaviors and have failed to take advantage of opportunities, because they are basically inferior human beings.⁸

Over the past three decades, national opinion surveys have reported a growing conservatism among white society. Undoubtedly, some of it is a response to the growing uncertainty of the times. Societal clashes on such issues as abortions, family values, immigration, taxation, gender issues and crime have contributed to the popularity of conservatism. However, the core issue of white conservatives springs from race. **They oppose government policies and programs that hint at the redistribution of public and private resources and power to benefit blacks.**⁹

Modern conservatism began its ascendance in the late 1960s as a white backlash to the Civil Rights Movement, black power protests and urban riots. **The demands of the black protests for improved living conditions through more wealth, power and community control shocked and frightened white society,** which responded as it frequently does in times of civil turmoil and uncertainty. The privileged class appealed to conservatism to reassert the supremacy of white authority and its exclusive claim to power and wealth.

Breeding Black Conservatism

Black conservatism is as old as black enslavement. But three decades of popular white conservatism, coupled with the social and economic devastation of black America, has attracted an increasing number of blacks to the conservative political movement. Black conservatives represent a potential danger to their race because of their alignment with white conservatives, who have always been anti-black. When black-white conservative alignments occur, black conservatives become a liability to blacks and an asset to whites.

By mouthing the social and economic views of white conservatives, black conservatives convert confusion of their personal racial identity to a confusion in the minds of black people about the real issue facing them.

Black conservatives operate under misleading colors. As an old farmer said, "They run with the hounds while pretending friendship and brotherhood with the rabbits." The confusion caused by their schizophrenic behavior provides a public cover for anti-black attitudes and activities and makes them appear as nothing more than white racists in black face minstrel makeup.

Becoming a conservative has historically provided personal rewards to individual blacks, with few down sides, because of the powerlessness of the black community to hold accountable those members who turn against it. Blacks found that it was not difficult to establish beneficial relations with whites once they accepted a subordinate position and committed themselves to placing the welfare of the white class first. Once that was agreed upon, tacitly or otherwise, blacks were then entitled to various forms of paternalistic protection, Christian charity, and meritorious recognition. White conservatives then conferred special status and recognition to conservative blacks as exceptional or acceptable.

Accordingly, black conservatives who place their personal advancement above the welfare of their race often gain significant personal and financial benefits, recognition and access to power. They are anointed by whites as "leaders" and touted as role models. In political and social situations, a black conservative is closely akin to Sambo in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In an historical context, a Sambo was black America's worst nightmare. The stereotypical Sambo was more than a minstrel man, a buffoon, and a plantation "darkie." Sambo represented the extraordinary success of social control, which was the ultimate goal of a slavery conditioning process that transplanted a white mindset into a black personality.¹⁰

The Symbolic Betrayal of the Black Race

The term Uncle Tom is not an appropriate label for an individual who is "white on the inside and black on the outside" and sells out his race by placing his personal gains with whites ahead of the rights and gains of his people. Contrary to popular usage of the label, the character Uncle Tom was not the culprit in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Uncle Tom was a brave man with dignity who cared about his family and race. The real villain was another black slave named Sambo. He was totally committed to the white master and used every opportunity to undermine the other slaves.

Sambo, in many respects, was like today's black conservatives. Sambo

always followed the white slave master, Simon Legree, and offered to show him how to “tree the coons.” It was Sambo who beat Uncle Tom to death both for refusing to whip a black female slave or sell out his people. Uncle Tom tried to empower his people by understanding and beating the social and political structure wherever he could. Uncle Tom felt it was important to get his people across the river to freedom. He risked his life to do so.¹¹

The Sambo character personified a very successful social control created by conservatives. He was such a successful phenomenon that the concept he personified became a greater danger to blacks than Uncle Tom. As blacks move towards structuring policies of racial accountability, it will be very important for them to know who helps and who hurts the race.

Sambo was the black slave character in numerous novels and movies who was willing to pick up a weapon and defend his white master against the approaching Union army or hide the master’s silver from Northern carpetbaggers. What is the difference between the fictional Sambo characters and today’s real-life blacks who join the conservative movement to argue against affirmative action, black reparations and set-asides? They declare that the world is now color blind and are opposed to any policies requiring whites to share the socioeconomic burden that centuries of slavery and second-class citizenship have imposed on blacks.

Isn’t espousing a color blind, race-neutral, melting pot society, a modern way of hiding the master’s silver? What are black conservatives conserving when black America is burdened by poverty, crime, unemployment, homelessness and other social pathologies?

Based upon historical treatment alone there should be a general antagonism between blacks and conservatives. Though conservatives claim that they are not racist, for centuries they have opposed programs and policies to help blacks. Andrew Hacker, a white writer, provided insight on this in his book, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. Hacker asserted that: “There persists the belief that members of the black race represent an inferior strain of the human species . . . Of course, the belief is seldom voiced in public. Most whites who call themselves conservatives hold this view about blacks and proclaim it when they are sure of their company.”¹² Since white conservatives share their true feelings only in the privacy of other whites, there is a strong possibility that black conservatives do not know how white conservatives truly feel about them.

The Black-Jewish Alliance

It is often a conclusion of “popular history” that blacks and Jews have always shared a strong alliance. However, in their struggles to escape bondage and second-class citizenship, blacks have had few temporary and no permanent allies. At various times, abolitionists, liberals and individual Jews have provided visible support to black causes and sometimes at great personal risk and expense. They have lobbied state and federal legislative branches of government, contributed financial resources, provided surrogate leadership and given their lives to assist blacks. But, these contributions were made by individuals and not by Jews as a class, religious or racial body of Samaritans.¹³ Prior to the 20th century, there were no known recorded public commitments of Jewish organizations to help blacks.

Beyond their good intentions, neither the abolitionists nor individual Jews achieved great success in helping blacks due to major philosophical flaws in their strategies. The flaw in the abolitionists’ strategy was that they did not recognize or treat slavery as the economic issue that it was. They made the abolishment of slavery a moral issue, which it was not. As a moral issue, the abolitionists appealed to the conscience of slaveholders’ concerning right and wrong. These appeals did not damage the slaveholders’ profits from slavery.

By not treating slavery as an economic issue, they, perhaps unwittingly, supported slavery and undermined their own anti-slavery arguments. They continued to use, rather than boycott, slave-produced products, such as cotton goods, tobacco products, table foods, alcoholic beverages, iron products, and jewelry made from gold and silver. They could have withheld their monies from the shoe industry, insurance and shipping companies and other businesses that directly and indirectly made their profits from black slavery.

After Reconstruction, the efforts of individual Jews to assist blacks were flawed, because they encouraged blacks to do something that Jews themselves did not want to do — assimilate into the broader white culture. Jews helped blacks to secure civil and voting rights, but these legal rights, though important in principle, gave the appearance of making blacks self-sufficient, when in fact, these gains could not appreciably change blacks’ wealth and power base. Worse still, the socioeconomic alliance between Jews and blacks did not emphasize blacks’ learning the self-sufficiency skills and strategies mastered by Jews.¹⁴

From the beginning of the alliance in the 1900s, Jews kept their problems and blacks' problems in perspective. Jewish problems came first. Jews did not totally identify with blacks. Jews, fleeing persecution in Europe in the first and second decades of the 20th century entered America just as blacks were being forced back into "separate, but equal" worlds of Jim Crowism. The majority of Jews were poor, liberal and alone. Some were sympathetic to black problems and allied with them against racial bigotry.

In the 1920s and 1930s, blacks returned the favor by aligning with Jews against religious bigotry and oppression. The alliance benefited each group and presented a common front against some common conservative enemies. The alliance ultimately gave blacks access to high levels of government and the corporate world. In return for Jewish support, blacks gave Jews *carte blanche* access to every aspect of black society. Jews established neighborhood businesses that survived strictly off of black customers. They advised black leaders on public policy matters. Jews also built entire industries around resources that blacks controlled or owned, such as sports, entertainment and music.

For nearly half a century, Jews were officially endorsed as the liberal intermediaries between white and black America.¹⁵ The alliance began to break down as blacks became increasingly disenchanted with their lack of progress and stagnant socioeconomic conditions. As the social fortunes of Jews and blacks began to diverge, the relationship became more paternalistic. Black organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Urban League as well as independent black leaders were advised to pursue social integration, upward mobility within mainstream society and civil rights.

Black leadership was convinced that once blacks had obtained integration and civil rights, the quality of life would naturally improve for all blacks. After all, the strategy worked for the Jews. As the society began to soften its virulent anti-Semitism of the 1940s, Jews used their new found mobility to secure wealth and power for themselves. However, a decade after the 1954 desegregation decision and the Civil Rights Movement, not only had black America's socioeconomic dilemma not been resolved, it was getting worse.

Blacks outside of the traditional civil rights organizations became convinced that the only way to improve the conditions of black America was for blacks to take complete economic and political control of their communities, institutions and culture.¹⁶ Many voiced anti-white sentiments

that frightened and threatened the white establishment. Through slogans, symbols and urban riots, black America informed the nation that, having lost faith in the system, they had established alternative black leadership and were committed to achieving black power.

By the mid-1960s, religious attitudes and socioeconomic conditions had significantly changed for Jews in America. They had become the wealthiest and most influential political group in the nation. They had been accepted into the dominant society, with practically unlimited mobility opportunities. They controlled a major share of wealth, businesses, professional and management positions, government influence and access to institutions of higher education. Having made remarkable social and economic achievements, Jews now had a philosophical base for becoming more conservative.¹⁷

The black power protests of the late 1960s moved many Jews closer to right wing, conservative principles. Jews' increased conservatism was reflected in their reversed attitude towards the role of government. Previously, "Jews and blacks were . . . advocates for a strong governmental role in combating discrimination, alleviating the plight of the poor and aiding social mobility," according to Tom W. Smith. In a 1990 article entitled, "Jewish Attitudes Towards Blacks and Race Relations," published in the American Jewish Committee's Jewish Sociology Papers, Smith wrote that both Jews and blacks encouraged government involvement to improve the lives of the socially disadvantaged through progressive measures such as the New Deal policies.

From the 1930s to the 1950s, they used the legislative and court systems to pursue integration and broad intervention policies.¹⁸ But according to Smith's attitude survey, after blacks demanded specific governmental assistance, Jews changed their minds about the role of government. For instance, Smith reported that today: "A majority of Jews do not favor government measures to help blacks, more government spending for blacks or the use of busing to achieve school integration." In response to the specific question, "Does the government have a special obligation to improve . . . [blacks'] living standards," more than 46 percent of Jews were opposed and 26 percent were either neutral or undecided.¹⁹

So, according to the Smith report, Jewish attitudes on the question of the government's responsibility to assist a structurally handicapped group, such as Jews were years ago, has now turned 180 degrees. At the start of the 20th century, they were pro-government involvement. By mid-century, they were opposed. Harold Cruse, in his book, *Plural But Equal*,

offers his explanation for Jews' turning towards conservatism and away from blacks: "The opposition of Jewish liberalism to the threat of quotas shows that when power enclaves are threatened, sociologically and psychologically the dominant white society will instinctively oppose, limit, and restrict . . . [such changes]. In such manner are the avenues to social and economic power effectively maintained."²⁰

While some Jews opposed the vehicle of quotas and affirmative action three decades ago, various Jewish organizations have worked to keep a dialogue going with the black community. Others have continued to feel alienated from blacks. Today, some Jews are upset because of the alignment of some members of the black community with the Nation of Islam, which teaches that Jews have been just as oppressive and exploitive of blacks as any other white groups. According to Smith, though there are heated tensions between the two groups and the ties are not as strong as they were in the early part of the 1900s, Jews have a more positive attitude towards blacks than any other white group. Smith's survey further indicated that the most conservative groups against blacks are Protestants and Baptist fundamentalists.²¹

Government's Conservatism Alienates Blacks

Anti-black conservatism from 1980 to 1992 severed the fragile relationship that was beginning to build between blacks and government. The government established new priorities that reversed most of the progress made by blacks during the 1960s. It withdrew its marginal support of blacks for political and racial reasons, just as it did during the Reconstruction Period following the Civil War.

President Lyndon Johnson acknowledged the social and economic inequities of black life. Through his Great Society Programs, he sought to do what government had failed to do during Reconstruction — to relieve the depressed conditions of black America by redistributing opportunities and self-development tools. But again, the larger society would not tolerate it. There was a backlash against all programs and policies that suggested wealth and power re-distribution between whites and blacks. Conservative whites opposed public policies that mandated busing, affirmative action, quotas, equal housing opportunities, set-asides and racial preferences.

Conservatives insisted that their actions were not racist and that they were committed to equal opportunities for blacks. The hypocritical dif-

ference between their rhetoric and actions was similar to the old line that, "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die." They proclaimed a belief in equality and parity for blacks, but they would not accept the measures that were needed to bring about that equality and parity.

Richard Nixon, the presidential successor to Lyndon Johnson, rode into the highest public office in this nation on the conservative white backlash to black power protests in the late 1960s. Shortly after his 1968 election, his domestic advisor, Daniel Moynihan, sent out the first signal that the federal government was ready to use its powers to put blacks back "in their place" by blaming them, not racism, for the breakdown of the black family and community as well as the widespread poverty and powerlessness that afflicted the black community.

The conservatives' national goal was to abandon the civil rights agenda and move towards a "color-blind" society. In 1970, Moynihan issued his infamous "benign neglect" memorandum that announced the new public policy on blacks. The policy behind the memorandum moved attention away from blacks, saying: "The time may have come when the issue of race could benefit from a period of benign neglect . . . We may need a period in which Negro progress continues and racial rhetoric fades."²²

Moynihan's memorandum signalled that the old government policy of using blacks as cheap labor was ending and the new policy would declare blacks obsolete. Alphonso Pinkney, in his book, *The Myth of Black Progress*, indicated that Moynihan's memorandum encouraged the supplanting of blacks with other ethnic groups. Moynihan wrote that "Greater attention to Indians, Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans would be useful." The government justified supplanting blacks by promoting the myth that "black Americans were making extraordinary progress." The nation swallowed the myth of black progress. Meanwhile, real change in black America's condition never even got off the ground.²³

Most black Americans did not agree with Moynihan's assessment that blacks had created their social ills through self-inflicted pathologies. And blacks didn't accept the government's claim that they were making extraordinary social and economic progress. "Making progress compared to what and whom?" they asked.

History has taught blacks that they, not the powerful social and economic system, are always blamed for their deplorable living conditions. Dominant society's belief that the negative conditions of black America are self-inflicted is based upon the fact that the conditions that blacks

endure are almost peculiar to blacks alone. White society has never been enthusiastic about helping blacks nor has it permitted them to acquire the tools to help themselves. Blaming blacks for their underclass status keeps the larger society free from recriminations or obligations to blacks.

Ironically, if the deplorable conditions of black America were experienced by white America for even a short period of time, the government would not hesitate to declare a national disaster and activate emergency assistance measures. But, since depressive socioeconomic conditions have been peculiar to black America for centuries, no such governmental intervention is to be expected.

The Death of the Black Civil Rights Movement

For everyone but the caretakers of old black civil rights organizations, the Civil Rights Movement for blacks is dead. Civil rightism for blacks had a brief life for the second time within a 100-year period, reached a point of diminishing returns, then died a premature death during the late 1960s. All of the rights gained by the Civil Rights Movement have been bequeathed to groups that are more acceptable to the larger society — women, gays, Hispanics, Asians, handicapped and poor whites. The first black civil rights efforts formally started shortly after the Civil War as slaves realized that they had received paper freedom and unexercisable rights. For nearly a century, they pursued their phantom freedom and rights nationally by way of public forums, courtrooms, schoolhouses, union halls and journalism.

In the 1954 *Brown vs. the Board of Education* desegregation decision, blacks won a battle, but the decision had incalculable destructive effects on the black community. During the subsequent civil rights protest period, blacks stimulated a rush of new social movements by a melange of social groups which piggybacked on black causes in their own quests for rights and freedoms. This offended the larger society in general and gave conservatives grounds to orchestrate a backlash. Since blacks were the largest, most visible and least acceptable group, they became the primary target of conservatives' angst.

The movement was drowned out by the new groups and out-flanked by the conservatives. In the heat of various civil rights battles for control over jobs, schools, housing, community services, businesses and tax dollars, black leadership ran out of insight, social tools and strategies for effectively dealing with the more subtle and less direct forms of racism

that cropped up.

As the other groups began to take away from blacks control of the civil rights agenda, conservative political forces started using their government and media power to diminish the black component of the Civil Rights Movement. They successfully destroyed the legitimate base of the black movement by diluting the movement beyond recognition. They identified every group that could possibly perceive itself as aggrieved and made it equal to blacks. Thus, the public perception of blacks was severely damaged and distorted. The unique problems that they faced were made to appear no more important than the problems faced by other, so-called victims of discrimination.

The black Civil Rights Movement, though spectacularly successful in many respects, had at least four major flaws that diminished the accomplishments of the movement and left critical imperatives for black America:

- The movement's black leadership focused its entire weight of resources on achieving **integration**. They believed, perhaps naively, that by removing all the symbols of Jim Crowism and acquiring access to various segments of white society, black people would gain equality.
- Black leaders failed to focus on neutralizing the forces behind Jim Crowism or developing effective strategies for black America to use in **dealing with the problems that spring forth from the maldistribution and racist control of wealth, power and resources in America.**
- **They failed to develop a long-term national plan with goals and strategies, spelling out where blacks ought to be going and how best to get there.**
- **In addition, black leaders failed to construct a national network of institutions to train new generations of blacks who could successfully assume leadership positions and implement a national plan for black empowerment.**

The combined effect of these four major failures left the black Civil Rights Movement with no place to go, no way to get there and no leadership to take them.

A few visible black organizations managed to survive by becoming “politically correct” and expanding their focus to include so-called minorities, poor people, gays, women and abused children. They could not survive in the powerful conservative climate by continuing to target the problems of blacks alone. Although black conditions continued to need attention, most black organizations could not raise enough money to survive by focusing solely upon their own people. The surviving black organizations remained visible by continuing to pursue the integration dream. It would not have been necessary for black organizations to abandon their own community if the Civil Rights Movement had established a sense of community cohesiveness founded on group economics and group politics.

The National Urban League and the NAACP are still active, but they have lost much of their influence and membership. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party are defunct. The Congress of Racial Equality joined the conservative ranks of a national political party and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference barely survives. This nation’s political apparatus disabled many of the civil rights groups by destroying or neutralizing black leadership: Adam Clayton Powell and Stokely Carmichael were discredited; Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and Medger Evers were assassinated; Rap Brown, Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis and prominent members of the Black Panthers were criminalized.

Many of the others were enticed into mainstream society. Consequently, the large block of black leadership was eradicated, changed or disappeared after just one generation following the great movement. Having failed to address the structural conditions of black America, the 1960s left little structure upon which blacks could build. Instead, that colorful era only left faded memories and soul-stirring songs.

The void created by the death of black civil rights presented the opportunity for a cadre of black neoconservatives to join the popular white conservative movement and proclaim themselves and their new organizations the new black leadership. They were publicly blessed by the highest levels of government and corporate America and they offered black America political and economic ideologies that were taken right from the conservative right-wing political bible. Their politically correct ideologies advocated less government and taxes, free market economies, privatization of government services and race-neutral government policies.²⁴ Black traditional leadership, like the black masses, was ignored by government and the media, except during times of racial disturbances

or anniversaries of the movement.

Conclusion

The problem of race and resources has been festering for hundreds of years, but has yet to arise as the core public issue in America. Whites have inherited the power and wealth of their ancestors through a social and economic structure designed and weighted to the advantage of non-blacks.

Blacks have inherited a legacy of permanent poverty and powerlessness. Black labor made the nation a strong, wealthy, international world power, but nothing has been proposed to seriously bring about remuneration, parity or fairness to black people. It is clear that blacks must both solve their own problems and structure a national plan of action that puts their priorities first and foremost. Self-empowerment is the only road to economic justice, but it requires the support of a national policy and plan of action.

Power and Black Progress

"Blacks and power are the oil and water of American politics."

— *Source Unknown*

Power plays a critical role in black-white race relationships in America. Though we cannot see, taste or touch it, we can sense its presence and attest to its strength and potency. It affects all manner of human relations. Power, in and of itself, is neutral. Only the motives and purposes of the power users make power good or bad. It has been abusively used to create divisions between black and white people around the world. **A racial and ethnic hierarchy disproportionately distributed nearly 100 percent control and ownership of wealth, material resources, and privileges to whites at the top of the social order, while blacks, assigned to the lowest level, were disproportionately burdened with poverty, powerlessness and social exclusion. The problems created by those power disparities spawned racial inequities that only power realignment can correct.**

Dominant society used its power to label blacks lazy, ignorant and criminal, then enacted laws that denied them jobs, education and justice. And, through the most insidious act of all, dominant society used its social powers

to assign an intensely negative human worth to black skin color, that caused millions of blacks to fear each other and hate themselves.

What Is Power?

Power is defined by *Webster's Dictionary* as the ability to bring about fulfillment of one's desires and needs. Behavioral scientists add another nuance to the meaning by including in the definition the notion of one entity imposing its will on another. Along the same line, Thomas Sowell, an economist, defines the term power in a much broader sense, in his book, *The Economics and the Politics of Race*, he adds the qualifier, that "Power is not simply the ability to get something done, but to get it done despite the resistance and opposition of others." It is this last definition of power that is used in this book.

A true powerholder can enforce its decisions and will on the less powerful by applying or threatening to apply penalties or force. Or, it can elect to secure compliance to its wishes and decisions by providing or offering rewards. The final decision on the use of any particular form of social control belongs to the powerholder. Those holding power have used it effectively in organizing and controlling blacks to the benefit of the larger society. Power has determined the quality of black life.

Social powers external to black communities have controlled and shaped black peoples' lives and behavior for more than four centuries. The power of dominant society determined whether blacks would walk proudly as free bushmen of West Africa or toil in chains as slaves among the bushes of America. Dominant society's power made blacks the economic locomotive engine that drove civilizations around the world, but assigned blacks to the caboose, so that they could not enjoy the fruits of their own labor.

Kinds of Power

To advance the self-interest of an individual or a group, humans use numerous kinds of powers. The most common forms of power in black-white relations are group power, institutional power, wealth power, numerical population power, political power, and voting power. The dominant society uses power mechanisms, such as government, private corporations, religious and social institutions, to perpetuate its self-interests and secure and maintain control of power-building resources. Black labor was a wealth builder and therefore a power generating resource that dominant society greatly valued

and manipulated. To maintain the power generated by black labor, white society used whatever means necessary to keep blacks powerless and under control.

Group Power

The United States' constitutional spirit of individualism notwithstanding, group power was the true and base origin of all rights in American society. Group power is typically manifested when a collection of individuals organize and pool their resources to achieve common goals and shared benefits. Such action is the primary instrument for securing objects of interest and power.

In the founding years of this nation, European whites built their dreams of becoming a wealthy aristocracy within a capitalistic democracy on the backs of black slaves. The collective power resources of many people, nations, religions, and organizations were aligned and concertedly used to exploit blacks. Their strategy illustrates that group power requires general agreement among the participating members on a core issue, but power evolves from the group's collective motives and goals.

Institutional Power

Institutions arise and exist only by means of group behavior. Institutions center their activities around fundamental social, cultural, academic, racial, religious, or financial needs. They permanently unite a group of people in a cooperative task. Once decisions have been made by the larger society, institutions use their resources to confirm and explain why the larger society made such decisions and occasionally, institutions are called upon to play leadership roles.

Institutions can acquire a variety of powers due to their non-biological permanency. If financially supported, they survive aging, political shifts and drastic social changes. An institution's powers are in proportion to and may be measured by its ability to create, store and circulate data, develop and influence public policies, aggregate people around issues, network with other institutions and organizations, and stimulate the development of leadership. Institutions that can do all of these things well become very powerful. The greatest limitation of institutional power is the lack of transferability of its powers to a particular individual, at a particular time, on a particular issue. This institutional limitation promotes institutional leadership instead of charis-

matic personalities. Considering black America's dire dilemma, the formation of a network of intellectual institutions is imperative for building power bases.

The Impact of Institutionalized Power on Blacks

The superior group power of whites influenced all the institutions they built: government, schools, businesses, churches, and social organizations. Institutions were the means of inculcating values that would perpetually maintain the self-interest of European whites and their descendents. Thus, institutional power has become a major factor in maintaining the power imbalance between blacks and whites. Government was one of the most powerful tools of the dominant society. Without the support and power of government, the white society could not have enslaved and segregated blacks for centuries.

Government, for example, enacted laws that forbade schools to accept black children and made it illegal to teach a black person to read or write. Initially, all formal religious denominations accepted the abuse of blacks and even offered Biblical justifications for it. Through government, businesses, churches and other institutionalized powerholders, white society controlled the wealth, power and resources. They also controlled blacks, their primary labor source.

Wealth-Power

Economic power has always been the greatest source of power for individuals and groups in America. Individuals who merge their political or financial resources into a group can become very powerful in a capitalistic democracy. For instance, Jews and White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP) have uncontested control over a disproportionate share of America's wealth. Wealth gives them options. They use their wealth as political tools to open doors to new economic opportunities for their respective groups; to punish other groups and to block the doors of opportunity.

Obviously, all whites do not possess great wealth and power. But, because of their strong sense of racial cohesion and their compulsive belief in keeping economic resources within their communities, the resources of wealthy and powerful whites stay within the white community. They rarely help non-whites, especially blacks. Chancellor Williams, in his book, *The Destruction of Black Civilization*, wrote:

“Caucasians will wage frightful wars against other Caucasians, but will quickly unite, as though by instinct, against non-whites, not only in wars, but in international policies. They have developed a kind of built-in solidarity in their relations with non-Caucasian peoples. This fact, as much as anything else, helps to explain their position as masters of the world.”¹

Together, wealth and politics represent a potent combination of powers, because they are versatile and by working together they can produce other forms of power. They are the root cause of racial stratification, exploitation and the unequal distribution of resources. In the present social structure, maldistribution guarantees that America will never be an “equal opportunity society.” Those who hold a disproportionate share of the wealth and power are not inclined to share or relinquish these tools. In combination, political power and wealth become practically synonymous in a capitalistic democracy.²

Since wealth remains concentrated and rigidly locked in the hands of whites, black progress will be difficult. As far back as 1790, the richest 10 percent of white households has held half of the nation's wealth.³ By the eve of the Civil War, one percent of the most wealthy whites owned 24 percent of the nation's wealth. One hundred years later, in 1969, they owned 24.9 percent.⁴

During the very same time periods, black wealth remained between one and two percent. It is astounding that the percentages of wealth controlled by whites or blacks have not changed throughout this nation's involvements in the Civil War, emancipation of the slaves and Reconstruction, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, Korean and Vietnam Wars, and the Civil Rights Movement, which was followed by a second reconstruction period. Through it all, the wealthy white elite collectively held on to everything.⁵

According to Census reports, the great disparity between black and white wealth and income levels continues to increase. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census in 1986 reported that the average white household had 10 times more wealth than the average black household. The wealth gap is so large that the three richest white Americans, with a collective net worth of \$15 billion, had a greater financial net worth than all black businesses combined.⁶

The major driver of the wealth and income gap between blacks and whites is the maldistribution of poverty. The poverty level for blacks is three times

that of whites and Hispanics. Nearly one-third of blacks are classified as poor. And 50 percent of all single, black female heads of household are poverty stricken.⁷ Poverty is a power impeder.

Numerical Population Power

In a democratic society, the numerical majority wins, rules and decides. The theoretical rights of a minority, may or may not be respected, especially if they are a planned minority. Numerical population power is the power that comes to those groups that acquire power through their sheer size. The black population peaked in the 1750s when slaves and free blacks accounted for approximately 33 percent of the total population.⁸ The high numerical strength of blacks caused fear and concern among whites. They feared the loss of their own numerical power. Word of black Haitians' successful slave revolt in the 1790s had spread across America and reportedly ignited several slave revolts in Southern states.

The First U.S. Congress enacted the first naturalization law that declared America to be a nation for "whites only." This naturalization act and other income incentives attracted a massive influx of legal and illegal European ethnics, followed by Asian and Hispanic immigrants a century later. The immigration quota on blacks remained zero until their total percentage of the population declined to nine percent. By making blacks a planned numerical minority, white society assured its dominance in a democratic society where the majority always wins.

Political Power and Its Supportive Concepts

Political power comprises all those activities that relate to the authoritative uses of public and governmental powers under existing traditions, laws and Constitutional authorities of government. But political power can be acquired either through or outside of the normal process of elective or appointed office. Political power is an important power for a depressed group to have because politics is the process that typically decides who shall have what benefits in life. However, groups aspiring to gain political power can only obtain and use it if they have economic power as well. Economic power allows a group to possess and exercise control over its own power rather than seeking access to another's power.

Voting: Illusionary Power

Voting in publicly held elections is a key source of power in any democratic society, if the voting groups have certain collateral forms of power. Emancipation and Amendments to the Constitution gave blacks the legal right to vote. Probably the only instance in which blacks exercise true group power is through block voting. **But, without wealth, numerical or social accountability powers, voting becomes a weak form of power for blacks. Voting rights have pacified blacks by allowing them to make choices, but never decisions. They could only vote their choice for candidates about whom the dominant white society had already made decisions.** The weakness of blacks' voting power was demonstrated when a white anti-Reconstruction backlash in the South took voting rights from blacks within a generation after they were granted in the mid-1860s. It took nearly another century to restore blacks' access to the ballot box.

Since the 1960s, blacks' consistent level of voter participation indicates that they steadfastly believe that their voting power can significantly change their life conditions. This will not happen, though much effort and expense go into black voter registration and get-out-the-vote projects. Blacks have successfully put black and white candidates into high governmental offices by voting in blocks. **But blacks have failed to buttress their block voting with other forms of group power building activity.**

Voting itself is a limited, transitory form of power that ends when the polls close. With the block vote, blacks may cast the decisive votes that put a candidate into office, but they cannot make that new office holder deliver. Threats can be made, but voting power cannot be exercised outside of the ballot box. Since elections are held every two or four years, the black electorate can be ignored or further damaged by those they put into public office.

Blacks' limited income and wealth encouraged them to support their political candidates with campaign workers and votes at the ballot boxes. But, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." Black communities in recent years have failed to use their limited financial power and resources to persuade outside forces to create change inside black communities. One of the most noteworthy times that they did was the Alabama bus boycott. Beyond a doubt it was more effective than the ballot box. **When money stopped flowing from black to white hands, the white society in Alabama listened and changed a little.**

Even when blacks vote blacks into public office, their ballot box victories do not necessarily translate into improved social and economic conditions for

black people. Some black elected officials have been reluctant to initiate programs solely targeted to blacks. Many have been convinced that we live in a color-blind society or are simply afraid to push for black causes.

Thus, black political power has yet to become an effective strategy for getting vitally needed resources to black communities. Though the rule of politics is “something for something,” black Americans are never specifically rewarded for their overwhelming support for candidates for public office. Black officials are skittish about using the powers of their offices to specifically address the needs of black communities because they are concerned about generating a white backlash. It is easier for them to propose or support programs that are ambiguously designed to assist everybody rather than just blacks. For their political support, blacks have always been denied quid pro quo, or something in return for their votes.

Some black office holders, like their white political counterparts, practice “trickle down” politics. They demonstrate their productivity to blacks by

Year	Number Elected	Unemployment Percentage (%)	Black Prisoners (%)	Blacks Below Poverty Line (%)	Per Capita Income (%)
1964	103	10.8	33.0	34.0	53.0
1970	1439	08.2	35.8	32.5	60.0
1975	3503	14.7	42.0	31.1	55.0
1988	6793	11.7	45.0	32.0	59.5
1992	8000	14.6	45.3	34.4	59.1

* Figures reported by the National Urban League; they are typically higher and more accurate than government figures, because they include blacks who are not actively seeking unemployment benefits, employment, or are only marginally employed. [9]

pointing to legislation and programs that they supported for civil rights, poor people, minorities, the homeless, immigrants, prison reform, and public works. Few can point to a program or policy that was enacted specifically and solely to relieve the horrendous conditions in black communities. At nearly every

level of government and in corporate America, there are some programs or policies that target women, Indians, Asians, Hispanics, handicapped and other aggrieved groups. Once black elected officials buy into the idea of supporting measures to assist everybody, they have, in effect, eliminated the importance of having a black elected official. Mainstream programs and policies have merely maintained the status quo, leaving blacks in the same status that they were in before blacks were elected or appointed to public office.

Since 1960, there has been a sizable increase in the number of black elected officials, an 8,000 percent increase, to be more specific. As indicated in Table 1, black conditions have either remained the same or worsened.

Black per capita income, compared to white per capita income, went up over the last two decades, but the gap between poor and middle-class blacks widened. The 8,000 percent rise in the number of black elected officials did little to impede the steady increase of blacks entering the criminal justice system, poverty, homelessness, unwed motherhood, drug abuse activity, or the homicide rolls.

Likely, without the increased number of black elected officials, black conditions would be even worse today. Yet, it is a dramatic statement about the dire condition of black America that it took an 8,000 percent increase in blacks elected to public office to keep blacks where they had always been.

Many black elected officials bewail their inability to change the conditions of blacks. The nation's 36 million blacks are a sleeping giant that, if properly organized and mobilized, could achieve group economic and political power. However, in order to do so, black disposable income must be just as organized and selectively spent as black votes are cast during an election.

James Jennings, a writer and observer of black political activism, summarized the fallacy that voting results in political power for blacks: "Voting in itself is not power . . . nor is having black elected and appointed officials power. These phenomena become power only when they can be used to influence and affect the behavior of . . . white society and others."¹⁰

The Importance of Power for Black People

Without increased wealth and political power, blacks cannot correct the multitude of social ills that have become imbedded in the fabric of their communities. Nor can they acquire the power they need through a shared power arrangement with the dominant white society. The dominant society will not permit blacks to use the power within white institutions to improve social and economic conditions within black communities, especially since whites as a

group generally have neither the interest nor incentive for correcting the conditions. Consequently, blacks must develop their own group and institutional powers then remedy the inequalities that have been historically imposed upon them.

Progress has eluded black people because they have been powerless to get what they wanted and needed, and they have not been able to stop others from depriving them of the necessities of life. Since slavery and the 1954 desegregation decision, blacks have experienced political and civil rights improvements. Blacks have relatively free access to voting booths and can vote for any candidate that the power structure offers. They have access to public rest rooms, lunchroom counters, and the front seat on any bus. However, civil rights did not bring about much change in their ability to pay for the best facilities or seats.

Civil rights have been ineffective for most blacks in terms of improving substandard housing, lowering their unemployment rate, transforming dysfunctional schools, removing massive poverty, reducing high crime or eliminating social rejection by whites, Asians, Hispanics and other ethnics. Black social and economic progress will come about only when blacks muster the power and the commitment to bring forth positive change.

Black Self-Empowerment: The Only Road Open

Self-empowerment is the most effective, if not the only road open for blacks to reach racial competitiveness. But, the first issue to resolve is a common understanding of what the term self-empowerment means. Since the 1960s, the term has been used in unclear and even contradictory ways.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines empowerment “to invest with legal power or to authorize.” This definition speaks to institutionalized authorities and powers. Quite clearly, this is not what black activists intended when they spoke of empowering black people and black communities in the 1960s. Most community activists were concerned about empowering black people to act in or be in a position to speak for their own people through established systems.

Today, it is politically correct to espouse “empowerment zones” in minority communities throughout the nation. According to one federal official, empowerment zone monies would be invested in infrastructure improvements and preferential tax incentives would be offered to white businesses in order to attract them into the very same black communities that they began abandoning 30 years ago.

How do infrastructure improvements and tax incentives for white wealth holders help blacks? Is the term empowerment zones used to mean self-empowerment? If so, how? Who is really being empowered and how will what the government proposes to do eradicate black communities' dire conditions? Self-empowerment for blacks can only occur when blacks use all of their available resources to accrue wealth and social power through a comprehensive plan involving all segments of their communities.

A properly developed self-empowerment plan that is supported in principle by all of black America could change centuries of deferred dreams into realized visions. Until black America collectively aspires to acquire its own power to alter its marginal conditions, it is highly unlikely that they will ever obtain power. A plan for self-empowerment must begin with a realistic analysis of blacks' assets and lead to the development of strategies to maximize their fullest potential.

True empowerment would give blacks new tools and strengths to deal with the power imbalances that today promote racism in the court systems, educational institutions as well as the government and private corporate sectors. These entities have no accountability to blacks, even though they exert tremendous power over blacks. They are repositories of the cultural power of whites. They have not changed through the centuries, thus, they still safeguard the culture, heritage and social values of the original European settlers.

Organize and Power Will Come

A great writer once said that, "Those who the gods would make powerful must first organize." Few words could be truer for blacks. Whether individual blacks are firm believers in the concepts of integration, segregation or moderation, they must all come together around the goal of improving the living conditions of their race. Although political and other philosophies may differ, blacks are united by their physical commonality. Divided they cannot achieve empowerment. They will be unable to make effective decisions about their future.

Blacks are no longer in servitude. They have a protected right to exercise their freedom of association. They may freely organize in their own best interest. No other ethnic or racial group will organize for nor represent blacks' interest. Society is competitive and becoming increasingly more pluralistic and there are no incentives for others to assist black people.

A plan for organizing will not spontaneously materialize. Blacks must

organize in order to direct their own future and long-term best interest. In the past, blacks organized to address specific issues that aggrieved them. The resultant organizations, therefore, lacked permanence. When the issue or the leader died, so did the organization, regardless of its effectiveness. Consequently, blacks have historically been caught in the constant cycle of reorganizing. Moreover, most black single-issue organizations have lacked the human or financial capital to provide a forceful, continuous, adaptive and sustained fight strictly on behalf of blacks.

Though Jews are a minority religious group, they can serve as an empowerment model. Jews wield strong blocks of powers — financial and political — that result from their strong sense of community, control of wealth and organizational networking. Under their religious identification and sense of togetherness, they aggressively protect their domestic and international interests, regardless of criticisms. Unlike blacks, they openly and aggressively use their powers to tilt the government and private resources to support issues and programs that benefit Jews. As a religious minority, Jews understand that in a government that is based on the belief of being of, by and for the people that “the people” are those who can concentrate their power and get what they want.

Harold Cruse, the historian, criticized blacks’ failure to develop new organizational leadership for collective decision making. Using Jews as a model of organizing, Harold Cruse lamented that: “History had taught Jews that without a strong, purposeful organization, there was little chance for survival in a hostile world. To this very day, blacks have not learned that lesson.”¹¹

Blacks are a sleeping giant, with some limited potential for developing economic and social powers. But, regardless of the limited nature of their potential, group power operates upon the very simple principle that whosoever is organized has already established a minimum level of power that they did not have as a scattered people. Blacks seeking to empower themselves will undoubtedly create concerns among whites who have grown accustomed to the historical belief that blacks should always be a powerless, poverty stricken people.

Although it appears that the dominant society would be more comfortable with American Indians, Asians, or Hispanics seeking increased group power, the black race is not so weak that it cannot develop the limited potentials for group power that up until now have been acquired by them only through chance and historical circumstances.

As a powerless group, blacks have at least two choices: They can seek self-empowerment through incremental structural changes or they can seek

to share with those groups that already have it. Blacks, to a large degree, have taken the latter route and have looked for access to white powerholders for a share of power. This decision was a natural outgrowth of the slavery conditioning process (as explained later in Chapter Seven) which taught blacks to align their interests with the interests of the masters. This social phenomenon is aptly demonstrated both in the behavior of Sambo in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the real life acts of black conservatives.¹²

At best, access to power allows the power seeker the opportunity of being near the powerholder and to secure personal benefits or limited benefits for the needful masses. In seeking to share power with whites, blacks must understand the drawback — that requests for power to improve their conditions must always be passed through and approved by the social and political forces of the major white powerholders, who are rarely generous to blacks in their decision making.

As James Jennings, in his book, the *Politics of Black Empowerment*, stated:

“For all groups in a given society, the prospect for improved incomes, greater holdings of property, and more favorable life chances generally is profoundly influenced by the group's relationship to the instruments of power . . . This means the ability [of blacks] to use all those sanctions, rewards, and inducements, and methods that people in the advanced society use to control their environment and influence the behavior of others.”¹³

Unity or group power is the most important ingredient in the advancement of a racial group. Group power is essential to make the most of blacks' access to power, as they endeavor to acquire power itself.

Progress Follows Empowerment

For black progress to occur, there must be a fundamental redistribution of wealth and poverty in America. They are burdened by too much planned impoverishment. Blacks cannot amass power from their individual holdings of wealth until they organize and develop a plan that will attract and retain wealth within black communities. Nearly every black community suffers from historical deprivation, low income levels and the flight of black capital and disposable income to white suburbs. The income that does remain in black communities, usually between two and five percent, is insufficient to maintain public services, support businesses, stimulate employment

opportunities. It cannot support a political structure dedicated to advancing black interests nor garner respect from other competitive racial or ethnic groups.

Organizing and Thinking Strategically

It must be clarified that the possession of power does not guarantee wealth. Nor does wealth always guarantee power. But, contrarily, the lack of power can guarantee poverty and poverty can always guarantee powerlessness. Controlling resources, maintaining a strong sense of community, and good organizational planning can produce both power and wealth.

It is the American way to organize groups for the purpose of acquiring and wielding power. While most groups realize that there is strength in numbers, apparently, according to one study, some blacks do not necessarily see strength in grouping themselves with other blacks.

In a study of group power, Evans and Giles reported that: "Increased concentration [of blacks] served to generate higher levels of ethnocentrism among blacks and raised fears among whites."¹⁴ The lower the percentage of blacks in the workplace, for instance, the lower whites fear that blacks will acquire power. This is an important finding and raises questions about the wisdom of integration. If race relations are based on power, the more blacks integrate into white society, the less chance they have to acquire power. Blacks' willingness to dilute their own strength destroys any perception of their having power. The perception of power is the first step towards the reality of power.

The Evans and Giles study revealed significant findings that have an impact on group power for blacks. The authors found that blacks did not conceptualize their potential for group power. And, more detrimental, blacks may actually perceive their group power to diminish when higher concentrations of blacks are present. These perceptions of racial concentrations and power are exactly the opposite of whites. Whites establish barriers, legal and otherwise, to insure their superior numbers and power.

Blacks' belief that something may be wrong when large numbers of them come together without the presence of whites can probably be traced to the conditioning process of slavery, which taught blacks to see themselves through the eyes of a white person. Thus, reversing years of self-deprecating thinking, low self-esteem and slave conditioning and organizing to achieve group empowerment goals will require careful strategic planning. Blacks must organize around new principles and purposes in order to confront the political and economic realities facing them.

To their credit, black intellectuals, in the ante- and post-bellum periods, did try to organize and plan. They shared resources and demonstrated some community-oriented accountability by establishing planning forums and advocacy organizations through churches and benevolent societies. Their effectiveness was limited by their meager financial and material resources, and lack of access to power sources. However, they had an impact on the attitudes of the black masses, especially during the most oppressive times.

Some noteworthy planning organizations that were singularly committed to black people were established during several historical periods: the Negro Convention Movement in 1830; the Niagara Movement in 1905; the African Community League in 1914; The Universal Negro Improvement Association in the early 1900s, and the National Negro Congress in 1936.¹⁵

Clearly, blacks felt a recurring need for national planning and research, but there was no commonly accepted goal or established public policy for blacks. Differing philosophies and political personalities confused the issues and bogged down the organizations. In the recent past, blacks organized over specific issues, such as discrimination, crime, unemployment or voting rights. As stated earlier, the organizations either faded when the issue faded or lost potency and became nonthreatening advocacy groups. They found it easier to organize advocacy groups whose narrow focuses did not appear as threatening to established powers.

One of the first known and longest lasting attempts by blacks to establish a national planning group was the Negro Convention Movement, which began in 1830 and continued through the Civil War. Black leaders throughout the North got together to identify problems, develop policies and speak as a united voice. This movement was followed by the Niagara Movement. In 1905, W. E. B. Dubois, John Hope, Maurice Trotter and other vocal young black intellectuals met in Niagara Falls, in Ontario, Canada, and founded the Niagara Movement.

This organization was primarily political in its objectives. Its leaders strove to seize the leadership of black America from the more conciliatory emphasis of Booker T. Washington.¹⁶ Further, they wanted to establish a platform from which to condemn the white prejudice that they found all about them. They hoped to resurrect the spirit of the angry abolitionist leadership that preceded the Civil War.

In the early 1920s, chapters of the Universal Negro Improvement Association sprung up all over the nation. It was the largest mass organization in black history. Marcus Garvey led the organization advocating race redemption, black pride, black identity and black solidarity in an African homeland.

Garvey followers were groups of young blacks who were disenchanted with the NAACP and the National Urban League's unwillingness to develop meaningful policies and programs to uplift the economically depressed masses. They organized the National Negro Congress, whose membership included aggressive men, such as Ralph Bunche and A. Philip Randolph.¹⁷

Members of the National Negro Congress knew that if they did not plan their future, the white power elite most certainly would. And any plans by whites to improve conditions for blacks would be at black peoples' expense.

Nearly a half a century after the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement, there is still no national black policy or plan for black self-sufficiency or empowerment. Since such a plan would singularly benefit blacks, it is black America's responsibility to build an organization that will develop a national plan. The organization should be an intellectual infrastructure that would not only develop the plan but would analyze and craft road maps to get black America out of its marginal existence and into a socioeconomic competitive position with other racial and ethnic groups.

Strategic Leveling of the Playing Field

Decision making through strategic planning is the wave of the future. The decision to organize and plan is the first step towards acquiring power and increased control over resources. **By organizing for self-sufficiency, self-empowerment, and racial accountability, blacks make a conscious decision to both effect and be responsible for their own future. Blacks have paid dearly for entrusting their future to non-blacks. If the lesson has been, learned then it is not too late for blacks to begin leveling the competitive playing field to avoid being locked into a permanent underclass status among racial and ethnic groups in the hyper-competitive decade ahead.**

Decision making is based in choosing between the probable and the possible. More specifically, blacks must identify and choose preferred paths based upon their historical experiences, present conditions and future needs. If blacks ignore these factors and continue to be non-involved as a group, it is highly probable that they will get stuck in non-preferred paths in the future.

More to the point, there is a rule of human behavior that states that if we continue to do the same thing that we have always done, then we will continue to get the same results that we have always gotten. If blacks want different results and an improved quality of life, then they must make different decisions as a group. **Once blacks design a national plan, even if the plan fails initially, blacks will have at least improved their image as an organized**