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FOCUS

The monthly magazine of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies®

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

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If Martin Luther King Were With Us Today

This month, we commemorate the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr., and reaffirm our commitment to his dream of brotherhood, peace, and a just society. From the time his struggle for civil rights and human dignity began during the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 to his death in Memphis in 1968, he achieved victories on many battlefields–public accommodations, voting rights, and equal employment opportunity among them.

In the 1950s and '60s, millions of black Americans remained disenfranchised by Jim Crow laws, and racism pervaded the nation. King's leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in nonviolent marches and civil disobedience actions helped achieve the passage of historic civil rights laws. Standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, he stirred the soul of the nation with his dream of blacks and whites walking together. Millions of Americans, of all colors and from every walk of life, joined the struggle to secure civil and political rights and protections not just for blacks but for Hispanics, women, Asian-Americans, and American Indians as well.

If King were with us today, he would be pleased with some of our accomplishments since his death–the more than seven-fold increase in the number of black elected officials, the elections of L. Douglas Wilder as governor of Virginia and David Dinkins as mayor of New York, and the expansion of the black middle class.

Were King still alive, his moral and physical courage would once more be a powerful force on the stage of American life. He would no doubt continue his struggle to end poverty and war and to build a just social order. He would be appalled and distraught that a third of the nation's black population lives in poverty. He would chastise those who seek to turn back the clock on civil rights because he would understand that racism has by no means been conquered and so much remains to be done.

King would insist that our policymakers confront the problem of structural discrimination with all its social and economic implications. Structural discrimination creates a vicious cycle–you can't get a good job because you don't have a good education because you lived in a poor neighborhood because your family didn't earn enough money. This insidious form of discrimination is not only a product of racism, but it is also the result of flawed public policies, of inadequate investments in our human capital. King would challenge our leaders to help Americans find a way out of this vicious cycle. Just as he once dreamed of blacks and whites sitting down together at the table of brotherhood, his call today would be for blacks and whites to sit down together to construct public policies that could move us toward a more just and equitable society.

Not one to bite his tongue, however, King would impress upon his black brothers and sisters that they, too, have a responsibility for their own advancement. I suspect that he would remind us of what he said in the sixties: "It is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of high maturity, to rise to the level of self-criticism. By self-criticism I mean critical thinking about ourselves as a people and the course we have charted or failed to chart."

Even as we demand that the government and the private sector produce decent jobs so that we can sustain ourselves economically and maintain our human dignity, we must do some things for ourselves. Indeed we honor King best by recognizing that there is some of Martin Luther King's blood, spirit, and guts in each of us and by accepting our present-day responsibility to continue the struggle for a more just and peaceful world because we share his dream. ■

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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Multi-Party Democracy in Africa

Scholars and Activists at a Conference in Senegal Propose Ways to Strengthen Democracy in Africa

by Kim Mahling

Across Africa, movements promoting democratic reform, economic improvement, and greater adherence to human rights principles are gaining strength. While demands for such reform are nothing new, the difference today is that many African heads of state are actually heeding the call for greater competition in the political arena, albeit some more willingly than others.

When labor strikes and other protests rocked the Ivory Coast last spring, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, president of the normally peaceful and prosperous West African nation since its independence in 1960, finally agreed to legalize opposition parties. Multiparty elections for president were held on October 28, 1990. (Nevertheless, Houphouet-Boigny was reelected amid allegations of balloting irregularities.)

Zambian protests last June of President Kenneth Kaunda's decision to cut the government's subsidy of maize meal, a staple food, forced Kaunda to announce that multiparty parliamentary and presidential elections would be held in October 1991. Kaunda, who has led Zambia since its independence 26 years ago, has presided since 1973 over a one-party state.

These are good examples of the shifts occurring in some African nations, but such change is not universal. Leaders such as Daniel arap Moi, president of Kenya are successfully resisting calls for liberalization, while others, like Robert Mugabe, president of Zimbabwe, have proposed turning back the clock to one-party rule. While a number of African leaders have agreed in principle to multiparty democracy and have established timetables and mechanisms to move ahead, there is no guarantee these leaders will continue on the same track.

A November conference in Dakar, Senegal, brought together more than 40 scholars, activists, journalists, and government officials to discuss the consolidation of pluralistic democracy in Africa. The participants came from 20 countries in Africa and Europe, as well as from the United States. Also in attendance were members of the international press corps, Senegalese government officials, and representatives of diplomatic missions. During the four-day meeting, they examined the current emergence of multiparty democracy in Africa and strategies for furthering such change on the continent.

The conference was sponsored by the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur la Democratie Pluraliste dans le Tiers Monde (the Center for Study and Research on Pluralistic Democracy in the Third World, or CERDET). Founded in 1986, CERDET is a nonprofit research center based in Dakar that studies political change in the Third World, particularly the development of competitive democratic processes. Funding for the conference was provided by the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) through a grant administered by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

The Failure of One-Party States

Jacques Mariel Nzouankeu, a professor at the University of Dakar in the School of Law and Economics and the director of CERDET, welcomed the participants to Dakar and outlined the conference mission. Milton Morris, vice president for research at the Joint Center, told the audience that "the Joint Center is engaged in the same struggle that occupies you and your respective organizations–that of facilitating the empowerment of our people."

NED President Carl Gershman commented on the democratic revolutions taking place across the world and on the high hopes he has for African nations. "Some think poverty in Africa is an argument against democracy, but it is not. It is an argument for democracy," said Gershman. "For if we have learned anything from the experiences of the past decade, it is that dictatorship, violence, civil war, and corruption are not conducive to stable economic and social development." Senegal's President Abdou Diouf spoke of the fundamental role the opposition plays in forming public opinion, promoting open debate, and acting as a counterweight of accountability.

In laying out the theoretical foundation for the conference, Jacques Nzouankeu reported that although the changes taking place in Africa have been accelerated by democratic movements in Eastern Europe, they remain rooted in the failure of Africa's own political systems. Nzouankeu sees events in Europe and Africa as linked in that "the attenuation of rivalries between the two superpowers has succeeded in dissuading certain countries from

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Democracy in Africa

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pursuing diplomatic blackmail..." Being anti-communist or anti-West is no longer enough to win financial support from one or the other superpower. The government of Mozambique acknowledged the failure of Marxism and the one-party state more than a year ago.

Nzouankeu believes Africa's emerging democratic pluralism is rooted in the failure of what he terms "consensual democracy" and the one-party system it leads to. He describes consensual democracy as functioning in such a way that there are no majority and minority opinions; rather, all decisions are to be unanimous. This unanimity, Nzouankeu said, "implies either perfect beings who are keenly aware of their rights and obligations, capable of distinguishing between individual and general interests, or persons without a will or freedom."

Some think poverty in Africa is an argument against democracy, but it is not. It is an argument for democracy.

Advocates reason that since consensus on policy is achieved through discussion and debates, there is no need for more than one party. In actuality, Nzouankeu argued, the one-party system has proved to be the major obstacle to national unity because "it imposes a monolithic ideology. . . concealing personal preferences under the cloak of lines of thinking and cliches claimed to reflect the will of the people."

Building Blocks of Change in Africa

Despite some limited successes at reform, the movement toward democracy faces an uphill battle in Africa. The conference focused on the many obstacles to overcome– religious and ethnic forces embedded in society, weak economies, and the lack of democratic institutions. In addition to these internal forces, external forces have also had an impact. Conference participants analyzed political, institutional, socioeconomic, and international factors affecting the development of multiparty democracy. Political and institutional factors include the lack of constitutional and other legal guarantees to pluralism. Political freedoms not presently available can be provided by rewriting and adhering to constitutions. Other topics touched on included allowances for a system of leadership succession and the virtues of an independent judiciary and a free press.

Sam Njuba, Uganda's minister of state for constitutional affairs, spoke on "The Constitutional Guarantees for Legal Pluralism." He detailed how a Constitutional Commission was established to rewrite Uganda's constitution to allow for a multiparty, democratic process through which citizens may choose their political leaders. He commented on the difference between such countries as the United States, where the constitution does not explicitly require more than one party, and Uganda, where such a constitutional guarantee is now deemed absolutely necessary.

Bona Malwal, editor-in-chief of the *Sudan Democratic Gazette*, a monthly newsletter on events in Sudan, briefly discussed the role the mass media play in promoting democracy. Malwal made the point that democracy does not increase power but limits it, and that the role of the media is to enforce those limits on the executive and legislative branches by exposing abuses.

Among the socioeconomic factors examined at the conference were education, economic development, the separation of religious institutions and the state, and the fostering of democratic values in the civil society.

John Holm, a professor of political science at Cleveland State University and an expert on democracy in Botswana, discussed the role civil society has played in strengthening multiparty democracy in that southern African nation. Holm reported that traditional, community-based, participatory institutions known as "kgotlas" have grown there over the years as forums for discussing development programs and government policy. Historically the kgotlas were used to build support for decisions by chiefs, and more recently by political leaders, but lately the opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF), has used the kgotla to promote and achieve its own agenda.

In addition, African nations cannot ignore the role external factors play in fostering or even preserving democracy. The conference examined Africa in light of its relations with the rest of the world, its connection to events in Eastern Europe, and its position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and regional conflicts.

Githu Muigai, a lecturer in the Department of Public Law at the University of Nairobi, spoke compellingly of the responsibility Africans bear to speak out on abuses in other African nations. He lamented the nearly three decades of indifference to human rights abuses throughout the continent. Muigai charged that African intellectuals have rationalized the abusive practices of non-democratic regimes in Africa, and he called for an end to such acquiescence. Having spoken out about inter-African relations, he went on to predict that change is inevitable in his own nation of Kenya and would come in a matter of months, not years, because citizens and public officials alike were finally beginning to challenge the non-democratic regime.

An Action Plan

On the final day of the conference, participants turned their attention to strategies for seizing the momentum for change and channeling it into action. They unanimously passed a resolution to establish an African Coordinating Committee of the Conference on Democracy. The committee's initial responsibility is to collect documents on democratic developments in Africa at the committee's sec-

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside this issue:

- **The States not yet united in celebrating the birth of civil rights hero Martin Luther King, Jr.**
- **Japanese Justice minister Seiroku Kajiyama removed from post in wake of racist remarks**
- **Focus readers survey**

Three States Still Say No to King

Most of the nation is honoring the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr., with official birthday observances this month, but three states–Arizona, Montana, New Hampshire–are not. Supporters of the King holiday are still active in these states despite the failure of their efforts to date, and they hope eventually to persuade their legislatures to join the rest of the states and the federal government in declaring the third Monday in January an official state holiday. The King holiday became federal law in 1983. The first official federal observance was January 20, 1986.

Of the three states holding out, Arizona has received the most publicity. For four years Arizona has vacillated on this issue. In 1986, after its legislature failed to pass a bill establishing the holiday, then-governor **BRUCE BABBITT** established it himself by executive order. Babbitt's successor, conservative Republican Governor **EVAN MECHAM** (who was later impeached and removed from office for unrelated reasons) rescinded the order in 1987 as one of his first official acts. In 1989 the state legislature approved and Democratic Governor **ROSE MOFFORD** signed into law a King holiday, removing Columbus Day as a state paid holiday. Right-wing organizations and some Arizonans of Italian descent gathered enough petitions to place the King holiday issue on last November's ballot, making Arizona the only state to put the issue to a popular vote. The referendum was defeated by just over 1,700 votes.

The defeat touched off a nationwide wave of negative publicity for the state that continues to threaten major sources of revenue, such as conventions and tourism. Several organizations have boycotted Arizona as a convention site. According to the Phoenix and Valley of the Sun Convention and Visitors Bureau, five organizations have cancelled conventions or meetings to protest the King holiday defeat, including the National League of Cities and the Episcopal Church. Other groups are considering cancellation of Arizona convention plans and will render final decisions in the coming months.

Several college football teams declined invitations to the state's two major bowl games, the Fiesta and the Copper Bowl. National Football League (NFL) Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE** has recommended to the NFL Owners Association that the 1993 Super Bowl, an estimated $300 million drawing card, be moved from Phoenix to another state. And the National Basketball Association says it will veto plans to host the 1994 All-Star Game in Phoenix, a loss to the state of another 50 to 75 million dollars.

There are signs, however, that Arizona may change its position on the holiday once and for all. The holiday is already official in 18 municipalities, including three of the largest cities, Phoenix, Tucson, and Tempe. The November referendum was approved in these cities, though it was defeated in Yuma and in many rural areas. **The narrow November defeat has given hope to Arizona's King holiday supporters and has fueled new efforts to make the holiday a reality. According to Reverend HENRY BARNWELL of Arizonans for King and GENE C. BLUE, chairman of the Arizona Martin Luther King Celebration, action on the matter is expected during the state legislature's current session. Under discussion are: a straightforward bill proposing an official state paid holiday; a bill proposing a "menu" system which would allow state employees to select days off from a list of state paid holidays, including the King birthday; and a bill that would combine Washington's and Lincoln's**

birthdays and establish a King/Civil Rights Day. The last two proposals are designed to placate opponents who argue that the cost of an 11th state paid holiday is too great. According to the state budget office, the cost of an additional day off would be approximately $500,000.

Tough Sledding in New Hampshire

In New Hampshire, 47 school districts and several cities, including Portsmouth, officially observe the King Day. The Manchester-based Martin Luther King Committee hopes the rest of the state will follow suit and encourage the state legislature to approve a King bill during this new session. The points of contention in New Hampshire are finances and Dr. King's popularity. New Hampshire is a fiscally conservative state that currently observes 10 official state holidays. Critics, including Republican Governor **JUDD GREGG**, oppose creation of a new holiday because of the new expenses the state would incur. The state's largest newspaper, the conservative *Manchester Union Leader*, also opposes a King holiday, citing the civil rights leader's stance against the Vietnam War and false reports that he was a Marxist.

If legislative history is a fair guide, holiday supporters face an uphill battle. A king bill has been offered in the state legislature five times since 1979, according to **ARNIE ALPERT**, public relations chair for the Martin Luther King Committee. In the most recent effort (March 2, 1989) the bill was rejected in the House by a vote of 255-89, the worst defeat in the 10-year legislative drive. The Republican-dominated New Hampshire legislature had three black members at the time of that vote. One of them, Democrat JUANITA BELL from Portsmouth, has indicated she may introduce a King holiday bill this year. One Republican member, **JACQUELYN DOMAINGUE**, has offered a bill providing for a Civil Rights Day to replace a floating state holiday unique to New Hampshire called Fast Day that dates back to colonial times.

Says Alpert, "The issue here is not a holiday to honor a man but what he stood for and what he died for. That is the message we are trying to relay to New Hampshire citizens and legislators."

Sending a Message to the "Aryan Nation"

In Montana, State Senator **HARRY FRITZ** and the Montana Human Rights Network are leading the push for a King holiday. Fritz, who also teaches early American and Afro-American history at the University of Montana, first introduced a King holiday bill in 1987 when he was serving in the House. That measure was watered down in a House-Senate conference committee and ended up becoming "Heritage Day," a floating holiday that can be randomly appointed each year at the governor's discretion.

Fritz will introduce a bill to repeal Heritage Day and establish a King holiday this legislative session. The Montana Human Rights Network has made a King holiday its top priority this year and promises to lobby strongly for Fritz's bill. Similar organizations in neighboring Idaho were instrumental in winning passage of their state's King holiday in 1986. **Groups supporting the holiday in both states are part of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, which originated in Idaho as a community reaction to white supremacist groups like the Aryan Nation and the Neo Nazis that are active in the Northwest.**

WILBUR REHMANN of the Montana Human Rights Network views the founding of a King holiday as an important step in the ongoing fight against the hate groups. "Montana will not become a haven of white supremacists. We want to send a national message that racism is not tolerated in this state," said Rehmann. "King best exemplifies the principles this country was founded on."

Kaifu Sacks Kajiyama

Following months of protests in Japan and throughout the world against Japan's Justice Minister SEIROKU KAJIYAMA'S racist remarks about black Americans, on December 29, Prime Minister TOSHIKI KAIFU removed Kajiyama from his post in a cabinate reshuffle. Although Kajiyama was stripped of his powerful position, Kaifu has made him chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's legislative affairs committee. Last September, Kajiyama compared the presence of prostitutes in a Tokyo business district to integration when he said, "it's like in America when neighborhoods become mixed because blacks move in and whites are forced out." Joint Center President EDDIE N. WILLIAMS responded by writing letters of protest to President GEORGE BUSH and Japan's Ambassador RYOHEI MURATA.

Focus Survey Questionnaire

For 18 years now, Focus magazine has presented issues to you that we believe are important, spanning the globe and the alphabet, from affirmative action and apartheid to voting rights.

Now it's your turn.

We'd like to know what you think about Focus and the topics we cover--as well as the ones we don't cover but should. We want your views on some of the issues that are currently in the public spotlight.

Please take three or four minutes to circle your answers to this survey and drop it in the mail to us postage free. Your answers will help Focus stay close to the issues that concern you.

1) What type of organization do you work in? (circle more than one if necessary)

a. research
b. educational
c. government
d. civil rights
e. business
f. law
g. media/press
h. health care
i. community organization
j. religious
k. other_____

2) What type of position do you hold?

a. manager/director
b. professional/technical
c. administrative
d. elected government official
e. appointed government official
f. community service provider
g. entrepreneur
h. student
i. other _____

3) What is your party affiliation?

a. Democrat
b. Republican
c. other_____

4) How long have you been a *Focus* reader?

a. less than a year
b. one to five years
c. more than five years

5) Do others in your office/home read your copy of *Focus*?

a. yes
b. no

6) How often do you read *Focus*?

a. every issue
b. frequently
b. occasionally

7) How effective is *Focus* as a contributor to the national debate over public policy?

a. very effective
b. somewhat effective
c. not at all
d. no opinion

8) What is your favorite *Focus* section?

a. feature articles
b. TrendLetter
c. Perspective

9) What would you like to see added or expanded in *Focus*? (circle more than one if necessary)

a. analysis
b. hard data
c. interviews
d. opinion
e. profiles of major personalities
f. letters from readers
g. other_____

10) Which subjects would you like to read more about in *Focus*?

a. politics
b. economics/business
c. education
d. poverty
e. crime and drug policy
f. civil rights/race relations
g. international relations
h. miliatry policy
i. immigration
j. health
k. other_____

11) Name the three most pressing problems facing American society.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

12) How would you describe race relations in your community?

a. excellent
b. good
c. only fair
d. poor

13) Was racism a factor in the recent elections in your municipality, county, or state?

a. yes
b. no
c. not sure

14) Do you believe that school curriculums adequately reflect the role and contributions of black Americans in this society?

a. yes
b. no
c. no opinion

15) If you have children in elementary or secondary school, do they attend:

a. public school
b. parochial school
c. non-parochial private school

16) If you have children in college, do they attend a predominantly black institution?

a. yes
b. no

17) Is affirmative action a useful tool for achieving equal opportunity for black Americans?

a. yes
b. no
c. no opinion

18) Are you economically better or worse off than you were three years ago?

a. much better
b. somewhat better
c. about the same
d. somewhat worse
e. much worse

19) Do you support the death penalty?

a. yes
b. no
c. no opinion

20) Do you support a ban on private ownership of:

a. hand guns
b. rifles of military design
c. all firearms
d. no restrictions on ownership
e. no opinion

21) Do you believe that either major party will nominate a black person for president or vice president before the end of this century?

a. yes (Designate party: Democrat Republican?)
b. no
c. no opinion

22) What is your annual household income?

a. less than $25,000
b. $25,000 to $50,000
c. $50,000 to $75,000
d. $75,000 or more

23) What is the highest level of education you've achieved?

a. some high school
b. high school diploma
c. some college
d. college degree
e. postgraduate degree

24) What is your racial/ethnic identification?

_____

25) What is your gender?

a. male
b. female

26) What is your year of birth?

_____

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Windy City's Controversial Third Party

Originally Created to Offer Black Chicagoans a Political Alternative, the Harold Washington Party May Not Be What It Seems

by Odessa Maria Archibald

"The Harold Washington Party arose out of the disenchantment with the Democratic party which has taken the African-American vote for granted because they perceive that we have no alternative, no place else to go." Those are the words of Chicagoan R. Eugene Pincham, Sr., a retired state appellate court judge and former Democrat, referring to his recent affiliation with the city's new black political organization, the Harold Washington Party (HWP).

Formed in 1989 and named after the city's first black mayor, the party's initial goal was to field black Alderman Timothy Evans as a candidate in the 1989 special mayoral election, to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Mayor Washington on November 25, 1987. Twice elected to Congress, Washington was in the vanguard of Democrats who operate independently of the party's powerful machine controlled by the late mayor Richard J. Daley. In April 1983, with a groundswell of support from the city's black, Latino, and liberal white voters, Washington became Chicago's first black mayor. He was reelected in April 1987.

Evans, an alderman for the city's fourth ward since 1973, finished second in the 1989 special election with 41 percent of the vote. The winner, with 55 percent, was Richard M. Daley, son of the late mayor and Democratic machine boss. Party officials point to Evans' significant showing as a mandate for the HWP's continued existence. Founding HWP member and current party chairman David Reed says, "We received a clear mandate from our community that they were ready to break from the Democratic party and establish a third party in Chicago."

However, radio station co-owner Wesley South says, "They (HWP) have some legitimate complaints about the Democratic party, but it's not like it has been in the past. We [black Democrats] are growing. We have clout. We have six state senators and 18 aldermen, a far cry from 20 years ago." Says Jacky Grimshaw, a former top aide to Washington, "Harold Washington was for African-American empowerment, but not as a separatist or with a separate political base."

The new party's leaders explained that the HWP has remained in existence because it provides a viable alternative for black voters discontented with the Windy City's politics as usual. Espousing a platform of neighborhood reform and political and economic empowerment, the new party exists, according to Reed, to meet the real needs of the community and to provide black political hopefuls with an enthusiastic campaign vehicle. HWP leaders contend that the Democratic Party has catered to downtown business interests and has erected a "glass ceiling" which prevents blacks from advancing to the party's upper echelons.

The HWP's mandate was put to the test this past November. After a battle for a place on the ballot that began with the Cook County Board of Elections and ended in a successful suit before the U.S. Supreme Court, the party ran a slate of 17 candidates for city and countywide offices, including sheriff, county commissioners, and state's attorney for Chicago.

The Cook County Board of Elections had ruled in August that the party was eligible for ballot status, but the ruling was struck down in September by the Cook County Circuit Court, which cited the party's failure both to secure enough names from suburban Cook County on the nominating petition and to file a full judicial slate. The state supreme court upheld that decision. The matter finally ended in the U.S. Supreme Court where Justice John Paul Stevens overturned the state supreme court decision and allowed the party's full slate to appear on last November's ballot. Stevens' judgement was rendered 12 days before the election. Pincham charges that the court challenge to the HWP slate was "a covert, clandestine effort of the Democratic party to keep the HWP off the ballot."

Challenging the Democratic Machine

While the HWP prevailed in the courts, it was unable in 1990 to draw many voters to its cause or its candidates. None of the party's nominees won in the November elections. The party received 1.2 percent straight-party votes and 14 percent split-ticket votes. Overall turnout was estimated at 53 percent, and turnout in the black communities at 35 percent. About 3.1 percent of the votes in suburban Cook County went to HWP. Of its 17 nominees, sheriff candidate Tommy Brewer and Cook County Board of Commissioners candidate Barbara Norman received the most votes. Brewer, an Evanston attorney and political newcomer, received 19.4 percent of the tally and Norman, a hospital administrator and medical consultant, received 18 percent. Judge Pincham, who was a candidate for the Cook County Board of Commissioners, received only three percent, although he was the HWP candidate with the

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Ms. Archibald is a communictions specialist at the Joint Center and contributing editor of *Focus*.

HW Party

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greatest name recognition.

While the numbers weren't big and black voter turnout was low, many observers say the party's challenge to the long-standing Chicago tradition of straight-ticket voting was important. "There were enough split tickets and HWP ballots to make straight party voting a dead letter. From that perspective, the black community helped drive home the point that straight party voting is untenable," says Robert Starks, a political science professor at Chicago's Northeastern Illinois University.

Lu Palmer, a political activist and radio talk-show host who played a key role in Washington's first mayoral bid in 1983, says the vote the HWP received "indicates that the Democrats have serious problems in the black community. Ticket splitting is very unusual for blacks in Chicago." Party co-chair Jim Hutchinson adds, "We have challenged the arrogance of a party that has taken us for granted and a party that has totally ignored us."

Does HWP Help or Hinder?

Although many agree that the city's black community needs an alternative political voice, there is no consensus regarding the solution. Does the HWP help or hinder the black community's pursuit of empowerment? "There is a lot of frustration in some parts of the black community in terms of local politics, a desire to have an institution other than the Democratic party," says University of Chicago political scientist Gary Orfield. "But on the other hand there is a concern that the Republican party may be strengthened by the existence of a third party."

Other observers have bluntly charged that the party may be a Republican tool to split the Democratic party and divide the black vote. They substantiate such claims by pointing to Reed and Hutchinson's past employment as aides to former Republican governor Richard Ogilvie (1969 to 1973) when Ogilvie was president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners from 1966 to 1969.

These skeptics also point to Reed's unsuccessful bid in 1968 as a Republican for the first district congressional seat, then held by black Democrat William Dawson. During the 1990 general election, the Chicago *Sun Times* published reports that HWP members approached the Republican party for financial support. Illinois' Republican Governor Jim Edgar, elected in November with HWP endorsement, acknowledged during the campaign that he had been approached by the HWP for contributions.

Alderman Bobby Rush, one of the original party organizers and political director to Evans during the mayoral campaign, says, "The party was originally organized as a principle of black empowerment, a vehicle for Evans to run for mayor. The current HWP is stripped of all its principle and meaning. Its only purpose at this point is to divide the black community and strengthen the Republican party." Rush represents the city's second ward and is a deputy Democratic committeeman. He was formerly involved in the effort to establish the Black Panthers as a third party.

Responding to criticism that the HWP is a political spoiler that will dilute black voting strength, Reed responds, "Those who raise that issue have determined that they have something to lose by the existence of a third party. Division from the Democratic party is healthy if the third party is fielding qualified, credible candidates. The fertile soil exists for us. We are going to be an institution. We have planted the seeds for an institution." Palmer adds, "We do need to cut the umbilical cord in our community to the Democratic party."

Skeptics also suggest that the HWP is a platform for political opportunists seeking a power base. "The current leadership in the HWP are folks who were on the fringes of the Tim Evans campaign, saw the opportunity for leadership and stayed with the HWP," says Alderman Rush. Some observers charge that Judge Pincham left the Democratic party and joined the HWP last summer out of anger over losing the Democratic nomination for president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners to Richard Phelan, who was later elected to the post.

Others suggest that Tim Evans' mayoral candidacy on the 1989 HWP ticket was a marriage of convenience. They point out that although he has not formally disassociated himself from the party, Evans maintained a low profile during the HWP's efforts in the November 1990 election cycle and he still serves as a party committeeman.

According to Palmer: "The Harold Washington Party that fielded candidates in November 1990 is not theoretically the same party that ran Evans for mayor in 1989. After the Evans campaign, the party was dormant and many efforts were made to get it motivated. But folks laid low, so a group began to meet to develop something out of HWP. The current party is the [HWP Chairman] David Reed version."

Finally, there are questions about the party's timing and purpose. The city's regular mayoral election will be held this year, and black leaders have expressed a desire to elect a black mayor. Democratic Congressman Gus Savage of Chicago convened a meeting of black leaders in December, and they have selected former alderman and newly elected county commissioner Danny Davis as the black mayoral candidate. Davis was a close ally of Harold Washington. Davis, Daley, and former mayor Jane Byrne have all filed as candidates for the February 26 mayoral primary.

Reed says the HWP will probably support Davis during the primary but has not ruled out running an HWP candidate in the April 2 general election. Black Democrats fear that such a third party candidacy could divide the black community and weaken the chances of Davis or any other black candidate. If that happens, City Hall is likely either to remain in the hands of Daley or return to Jane Byrne. ■

Drug Report Coming

The Joint Center will soon release a report on its Urban Anti-Drug Project focusing on drug abuse trends and approaches to treatment in 10 major American cities.

Growing Up With Less

Growth of Households Headed by Women Is Only One of Many Causes for the Sharp Rise in Black Child Poverty

by Marc DeFrancis

The broad economic forces that have buffeted younger black families of all types over the last 15 years may be blamed for the rising poverty of black children at least as much as the more often noted rise in female-headed families. The dawning recession therefore confronts these children with a serious new threat. Sociologist Cynthia Rexroat recently discussed these and other findings of her research at a Joint Center conference held in December. Formerly a research associate at the Center, Rexroat is now assistant professor of sociology at Clemson University in South Carolina. The full results of her study, which examines black child poverty from 1960 to 1985, will be published as a Joint Center monograph next spring.

The Face of Poverty Today. In opening the December 10 conference, Eddie Williams, president of the Joint Center, observed that "increasingly, the face of poverty in America is the face of a black child." Indeed, as of 1984, 46.5 percent of all black children were living below the poverty threshold.

According to Rexroat, the worsening of poverty during the 1980s was a continuation of what had begun in the 1970s as manufacturing declined. "The recession of 1981-82 and the policies of the Reagan administration together gave child poverty a further push in the wrong direction," she says. Among black children the tumble was severe: though their poverty rate had dropped 4.5 percentage points between 1969 and 1979, by 1984 this progress had been wiped out by a subsequent 8.6 point rise in poverty.

The public well knows that a rising proportion of black children live in families that are not headed by couples. Between 1960 and 1985, these children grew from 25 to 50 percent of all black children. Yet while people tend to think this has been caused by an increase in out-of-wedlock births, in reality such births have declined steadily among black women since 1970.

The dramatic rise in fatherless black households, Rexroat says, stems from many causes. As is true among whites, black women have begun to marry later and to have fewer children when they do, and their rates of divorce and separation have also quickened. These and other changes have meant that that among all black children, those in female-headed families are making up a growing proportion of the total.

The North vs. the South. The economic "expansion" of the 1980s seems to have done nothing to alleviate the poverty of those who work, while in some regions unemployment itself has worsened. Over the last 15 years, layoffs and plant shutdowns have continued in the Rust Belt. Entry-level blue-collar employment for young workers has all but disappeared there. Rexroat cites Indianapolis as emblematic of this decline: between 1969 and 1979 roughly 50 percent of the children of "working poor" families in Indianapolis slipped into dependence on public assistance. (For this study Rexroat defines the "dependent poor" as those for whom public assistance makes up 50 percent or more of their total income, and the "working poor" as those who are in poverty even though 50 percent or more of their income is from wages.)

In the Southern states the pattern of work and poverty has been very different. Lured by cheap labor, low state and local taxes, and an anti-union environment, since the 1970s many firms have folded their Northern plants and moved South. This trend, combined with the fact that welfare qualifications have been much more restrictive than in the North, may help explain why in the South working poor families (41 percent of the region's black children) far outnumbered the dependent poor (13 percent) in 1984. By contrast, in the Northeast that year dependent poor families (31 percent) far outnumbered the working poor (22 percent).

The tightening of welfare eligibility and the reduction in benefit levels in the early 1980s rubbed salt in the wounds caused by the economy. Rexroat recalls the damage wrought by a federal law passed in 1981, which established heavy penalties for states that allowed ineligible women to slip through the screening procedure. "As a result," she says, "state case workers became overcautious, and in the end denied benefits to many eligible families. This happened nationwide."

Immediate prospects for improving welfare policy are slim. Federal reform legislation passed in 1988 is already proving too costly for strapped state budgets. "Moreover," Rexroat says, "the current recession, like earlier ones, will only make things worse. I'm afraid what SCLC President Joseph Lowery once said is still true: 'When America catches a cold, the black community gets pneumonia.'"

A summary of Rexroat's findings in booklet form is available from the Joint Center. ■

Mr. DeFrancis is senior editor at the Joint Center.

Democracy in Africa

(Continued from page 4)

retariat, temporarily located at CERDET's offices in Dakar. Nzouankeu sees this collection as the beginning of a center where researchers can analyze moves toward multiparty democracy in Africa and the Third World and use that research to promote further change. In addition, the committee will facilitate networking among African democrats.

CERDET is building the continent-wide committee from the bottom up. As the first stage, conference participants will recruit other interested persons in their own countries to form national sections, which will formally meet and elect national vice presidents. Vice presidents, in turn, will meet by regions and elect a president.

While there is cause to be encouraged by the changes that have taken place in Africa, continued progress will require stepped-up pressure from within Africa and also from nations such as the United States. African heads of state are not likely to share power voluntarily. Rather, inducements and pressure will be needed to limit their authority. The United States and other nations can pressure governments diplomatically, and even reduce foreign aid unless change occurs. Within Africa, centers such as CERDET and the African Coordinating Committee for the Conference on Democracy will be vital in promoting and assisting in the transition process. Ultimately, however, it is the African people themselves and reform groups within the African states who must be the engine for change. ■

Join Us At Our Annual Dinner

Robert E. Allen, chairman and CEO of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company, and Eddie N. Williams, president of the Joint Center, invite you to our 14th annual dinner on Tuesday, April 9, 1991. The dinner will be held at the Washington Hilton Hotel here in the nation's capital. Mr. Allen is this year's national dinner chairman.

The dinner, which is the Joint Center's only fundraising event, provides significant support for our research and outreach programs. Chairman's Circle, $10,000; Sponsors', $5,000; Patrons', $3,000. Individual tickets are also available for $300 each. For reservations or further information please call Alfreda Edwards at (202)-625-3555.

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