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Special Report on Second Primaries
Also: New statistics on southern black voter registration

FOCUS



FOOD CRISIS IN AFRICA

Ruinous food shortages plague much of Africa; an administrator at the U.S. Department of Agriculture talks about American and African efforts to find short and long-term solutions.



THE DEBT OF DEVELOPING NATIONS

Third World countries owe more than $700 billion to the banks of the industrial world. How did such a debt pile up? How can it be managed?

THE FOLLY OF THE SUB-MINIMUM WAGE

The Reagan administration and the National Conference of Black Mayors endorse the idea as a youth employment measure, but a noted social scientist says it's already been tried—and failed.

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Joint Center for Political Studies

Perspective

July 2 will mark the twentieth anniversary of President Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a legislative landmark that required great effort to erect. Among other things, the act mandated equal access to public accommodations; authorized the Justice Department to sue to desegregate schools and public facilities; provided for the denial of federal funds to institutions that discriminate; outlawed discrimination in most places of employment; and called for affirmative action as relief for victims of unlawful employment discrimination. Beginning on June 28, the Joint Center will sponsor a two-day conference at the National Academy of Sciences to commemorate the anniversary of the act. "The Civil Rights Act: Two Decades Later" will be an occasion to assess the impact of the act and call attention to the unfinished civil rights agenda.

Coretta Scott King has agreed to serve as the honorary chairperson, and we will have as participants some of the nation's foremost civil rights advocates, scholars, and political analysts, including social psychologist Kenneth B. Clark; David Garrow, author of *Protest at Selma;* Vernon Jordan, former president of the National Urban League; pollster Louis Harris; and Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta.

In some ways, the social and economic indicators show a disheartening lack of progress over the past twenty years. As a recent Joint Center study showed, blacks as a group still earn 55 percent of what whites earn—almost exactly the same proportion as in 1964. Blacks also register to vote in almost the same proportions as two decades ago—about 60 percent—and many of the barriers to registration and voting that they confronted in 1964 still persist today. Affirmative action against racial discrimination, a concept that was introduced in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, is under strong attack again. We are discussing some of the same issues that were prominent twenty years ago—the crisis of the black family, to name one.

But these signs of stagnation are somewhat misleading. They mask very real and major changes that have occurred within the black community, as well as dramatic trends in the society as a whole.

Although black economic progress seems stagnant overall, there has developed both a sizable and fairly stable black middle class. At the same time, however, there has emerged a large group of black families headed by single females—more than half of which are in poverty. This polarization of the black community is one of the most significant developments of the past quarter century; its implications have not yet been adequately explored. There has also been real progress in the accumulation of black wealth as compared to white wealth—but from a much lower base, so that black families still have only one-third the wealth of whites. But, perhaps most significant, the trends of the last two decades have not been flat: progress *was* made up through the late 1970s; it has been eclipsed by precipitous declines since then.

Likewise, there has been political and social progress as well as inertia. The number of black elected officials has grown continually, if not always dramatically. Public school segregation has decreased markedly in the South (although it has increased in the North). Many forms of discrimination are simply unacceptable to most Americans today.

At the same time, American society as a whole has changed. The anti-discrimination approaches of the Civil Rights Act have been expanded to many other groups, including Hispanics, women, the handicapped, and the aged. The industrial base of our economy is giving way to a technological and service base, and no one is sure of all the ramifications of this development. The Joint Center's conference will explore the act in light of these historical changes.

Participants will describe the objectives of the Civil Rights Act and chart the change over the past two decades in public attitudes towards those objectives; examine how the act has affected the socioeconomic and educational status of blacks; and discuss changes in the political context of the civil rights struggle and the evolution of minority politics since the act was passed.

I hope many of you will join us for this important conference (see page 7 for other details).

Eddie N. Williams
President

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Food Crisis in Africa

by Joan S. Wallace

(The author is administrator of the Office of International Cooperation and Development, U.S Department of Agriculture.)

More than 600 million people worldwide lack sufficient food to meet their basic nutritional needs. One child in four born in the developing countries dies before the age of five, usually of malnutrition. Each year, 100,000 children go blind from a lack of vitamin A. These are the dimensions of the world's food problem.

Nowhere is the problem more serious than in Africa. In most of the developing world, food production has outpaced population growth, but in Africa, per capita food production has actually declined in recent years. Of all the continents, Africa has the largest percentage of hungry people in its population.

Even the casual visitor can readily see the devastating impact of hunger and malnutrition. Disease is rampant in many nations. Hunger impairs its victims physically and mentally, rendering them unable to help themselves and reducing life expectancy to less than 50 years.

Food shortages have plagued Africa in the past, but the situation today is especially perilous. The worst drought of the century has ruined the crops of African farmers. For the past three years, this drought has hit more countries than ever before; in past crises (in the Sahel in 1972-74 and eastern Africa in 1980-81), the emergency was more limited in scope. Countries that normally export food to their neighbors in southern Africa are now critically short themselves.

The food supplies of some 23 countries—with a combined population of more than 225 million—are threatened. About 9 million people face an immediate crisis and many have already died of starvation. Recently, leaders of six African nations appealed directly to over 150 U.S. relief organizations for help in meeting this emergency.

Obstacles

What is preventing the African nations from building their food supplies? There is, of course, no single obstacle. The primary problem is poverty. Modern agriculture requires investments in technology, research, machinery, and training that most African nations cannot afford. But there are other, less obvious, factors curtailing African food output as well.

Among these are the weather and a lack of arable land. Three-quarters of Africa below the Sahara is too dry for farming without irrigation, and few countries have water management systems that enable them to use their meager supplies effectively. This makes sustained production extremely difficult for African farmers.

Storage and distribution are two other major stumbling blocks. Foreign food shipments are limited because there is so little storage capacity in the recipient countries. Existing facilities are plainly inadequate and they allow significant losses from insects. And with few paved roads in the outlying regions of some countries, it is virtually impossible to deliver food to the rural areas where the need is often greatest. Similarly, rural farmers often cannot deliver their harvest to city markets before it spoils. A Tanzanian official once told me that his country lost 60 percent of some crops because of inadequate storage and distribution.

A lack of foreign exchange (hard currency) limits the amount of food that many African countries can buy to satisfy their needs. Since few of these countries have industries capable of earning large amounts of hard currency, the purchase of needed foodstuffs is difficult.

In some African nations, agriculture is not the highest priority—resources are severely limited and sometimes industry or public health gets more attention. In others, food problems are compounded by government corruption, warfare, revolution, or political strife. Some nations have opted for policies that subsidize food for urban consumers rather than stimulating stronger production by offering farmers better prices. These policies encourage reliance on imported food and aid rather than strengthening self-reliance. Fortunately, though, most African nations have been wise enough to give food production high priority.

Seeking Solutions

Agricultural development in Africa will take a long time. It will require a concerted effort by developed countries, by international organizations such as the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), by private voluntary groups such as CARE and Catholic Relief Services, black groups, and the Africans themselves.

Since the end of World War II, the United States has provided other countries with $165 billion in economic assistance, of which more than $113 billion has been outright grants or gifts. We have also pledged increasing amounts of food to international efforts such as the World Food Program. Last year, we pledged a record $250 million to that program—14 percent more than in the preceding year. We have also made surplus commodities available to private organizations such as CARE for feeding needy people abroad.

U.S. economic assistance to Africa amounted to $880 million last fiscal year, and, because of the food crisis, this figure increased to $1.15 billion in fiscal '84. This increase comes at a time when many other government programs are being cut or held at the same funding levels.

Recently, FAO called on all nations to contribute additional food and economic assistance to African countries in the wake of the serious drought there. To help meet this goal, the U.S. government earmarked $138 million worth of emergency food aid for Africa last fiscal year and has increased this figure to $222 million so far this fiscal year.

However, food aid is at best a temporary solution. It is the long and hard process of agricultural development that holds promise for Africa. At last year's World Food Council Ministerial meeting in New York, the Agriculture Ministers of both Kenya and Lesotho emphasized that aid is not the ultimate answer and that a long-term commitment to sound development policies is needed. The African nations must have strong agricultural policies and develop expertise in research, marketing, and management.

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The agriculture ministers of African nations met last year at a regional conference sponsored by FAO and committed themselves to greater efforts under the new Lagos Plan of Action. This plan, devised by and for Africans, aims at building agricultural trade within the continent, creating national food reserves, removing barriers to production, and ending dependence on food from outside sources.

The keys to successful development are effective technical assistance and training. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers such assistance and training through its Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD). Last year, OICD sent over 975 technicians to 85 countries to promote agricultural development under agreements with the Agency for International Development (AID), international organizations, and foreign governments. Its projects involve everything from nutrition to food marketing. But they all have one common goal—helping developing nations to help themselves.

OICD nutritionists have worked with the Egyptians on fortifying wheat to prevent anemia and with the Nigerians on improving weaning foods. In the Sahel, OICD has worked on regional food crop production and financial management for agricultural development projects. In Kenya, we have researched dryland cropping and projects to improve livestock and range management. Several of our African projects focus on the need for more fuelwood, the lack of which has become a critical problem in many parts of the continent. All told, there are over 40 OICD technical assistance projects to help African nations provide food for their people.

OICD also offers training and education in agriculture and rural development to foreign administrators, ministry officials, scientists, and technicians. More than 70,000 agriculturists from the developing world have taken part in these USDA programs since 1950. Offerings range from short-term technical training to coordinating study by foreign students at U.S. colleges and universities. Foreign governments, AID, and international organizations fund this training.

Other OICD projects involve work with international organizations that seek to overcome world food problems. These organizations include the development banks, the World Food Program, World Food Council, and FAO. The United States makes substantial contributions to these organizations and works closely with them. The United States initiated FAO's postharvest loss prevention program and has strongly supported its soil management and fertilizer programs. We have also lent support to FAO efforts to combat plant and animal diseases. All of these projects are of great importance to Africa.

Involving U.S. Blacks

We must not forget that the black experience in some nations is one of hunger and deprivation on a scale rarely found in the United States. Black scientists, educators, and researchers here should have a special interest in helping to solve the problems afflicting blacks in other nations.

American blacks must commit themselves to making a difference. We have an obligation to those overseas who are burdened daily by famine, food shortages, and malnutrition. Countless Africans have watched their children die in the Sahel and in Ethiopia in the last decade. Even in good years, many have never known the comfort of having enough to eat, of life without the fear of starvation.

Successful international development is predicated on meeting the needs of blacks, Asians, Latin Americans—people whose cultures are far different from the majority culture in America. The history of international development is scarred by the failure to appreciate these cultural differences; for this reason, it is particularly important that minorities play a larger role in development.

For example, opportunities exist today for historically black colleges in overseas projects. Institutions like Tuskegee, Southern, and Prairie View have been teaching agricultural techniques to small farmers for decades, and the farmers of Africa and the Caribbean usually work small plots of land. Not long ago, OICD hosted a conference to familiarize its staff with the resources available at the nation's historically black colleges; this, we hope, will result in greater involvement for these institutions in USDA's international programs.

Other efforts are also under way to include minorities and women in development projects: AID recently provided a grant to the Booker T. Washington Foundation to establish links between American and African blacks so that, together, they might explore possible solutions to socioeconomic problems; and OICD has begun giving special attention to the training of women, since so many farmers in developing nations are women. OICD also offers special courses for women managers from developing countries.

Private and religious organizations have also played a major role in fostering development and providing food to the needy overseas. Much of the food the U.S. government donates is handled by private voluntary groups. The names of these groups are all familiar: CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Relief, and Church World Services are just a few. All of these groups rely on donations and volunteers.

There is much work to be done in Africa, and U.S. blacks—like all Americans—have an obligation to help. We must support voluntary organizations and seek a greater role in development programs. Above all, we must take a greater role within the institutions that set development policy.

. . . Subminimum Wage

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the American economy. Initiatives such as the Boston Compact, the New York Partnership Summer Employment Program, and the Philadelphia Urban Coalition Summer Employment Program demonstrate that important gains can be made to get youth into private sector jobs under current employment and training policies. Programs like these ought to be supported and expanded.

The national policy objective should be to elevate low-skilled youth to a point where they can earn a decent wage, not diminish our wage standards on the erroneous claim that to do so will lower the teenage unemployment rate.

The Run-off Primary, Blacks, and the Democratic Party

The Reverend Jesse Jackson, in his campaign for the Democratic party's presidential nomination, has criticized run-off primaries as a form of discrimination against blacks. Jackson contends that run-off primaries, also known as second primaries, reduce the chances of black candidates winning their party's nomination for office. He has made the elimination of these primaries a principal goal of his candidacy and perhaps a condition of his support for the Democratic party presidential nominee.

This position has stirred considerable controversy over the effects of run-off primaries and what, if anything, should be done about them.

1. What is a run-off primary?

If three or more candidates run for nomination in a partisan primary and none receives a majority of the votes cast, several states require a *run-off,* or *second,* primary. In the runoff, the two highest vote getters must compete head to head, and the winner is the party's nominee. Sometimes the candidate who won the largest number of votes in the first primary loses in the run-off.

Run-off elections are also held in some jurisdictions with nonpartisan election systems. After an open primary in which any qualified voter—not just party members—can vote, a run-off election is held in which the two highest voter getters compete for office. Both run-off primaries and run-off general elections are "majority vote requirements," but in the latter, candidates compete in only two elections, while a run-off primary means candidates must run three times—in two primaries and in the general election.

2. Where are run-off primaries used?

Run-off primaries are mandated by law in nine southern states—Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas—and in Oklahoma. In most of these states, state law requires run-off primaries for federal and state offices and local laws require run-off primaries for local elections.

Run-off primaries are almost unknown outside the South, although a few places have modified run-off systems, in which a run-off is required only if no candidate receives a minimum percentage of the votes cast. For example, Iowa requires a minimum of 35 percent and New York City requires a 40 percent vote in the first primary.

Louisiana and a few cities, such as Boston, have nonpartisan run-off elections. Many local jurisdictions in the South have attempted to institute nonpartisan majority-vote systems since 1965 but have met with objections by the Justice Department under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

3. When were run-off primaries instituted?

The southern states began to adopt the run-off primaries at the beginning of this century, during the same period that statewide primaries—often white primaries—were begun. Mississippi was the first state to mandate run-off primaries, in 1902. Other states conducted run-offs even before it became a legal requirement: South Carolina, for example, used run-off primaries from 1896 on, but wrote the requirement into law only in 1915. By 1939, all the nine southern states had adopted the procedure.

4. Were run-off primaries instituted in order to restrict black political power?

Because run-off primaries were instituted at the same time blacks were being successfully disenfranchised by other means, some analysts have concluded that their intent was not discriminatory. These analysts have linked the procedure to the existence of one-party politics in the South. They argue that it facilitated intraparty factional competition by allowing several candidates to compete while ensuring majority decisions.

Other analysts, however, have argued that the purpose of run-off primaries could well have been to reinforce the exclusion of blacks from political power, especially since some blacks continued to vote in the South well after the major disenfranchisement measures were adopted.

Both purposes could have been intended; exclusion of black voters or dilution of their votes has shaped the character of southern politics for the last century.

5. How do run-off primaries affect black candidates?

Those who argue most strongly for the abolition of run-off primaries focus on the experiences of black candidates. In a number of contests for elective office—federal, state, and local—black candidates have led in the first primary, only to be defeated in the run-off. In these cases, black voters had united behind the black candidate, while white voters had split their votes in support of two or more white candidates in the first round, but united behind the leading white candidate in the run-off.

The best-known recent example is the 1982 Democratic congressional primary in the second district in North Carolina. There, H. M. "Mickey" Michaux, a black candidate, led in the first primary with 44.5 percent of the vote, but lost in the run-off when white voters coalesced behind Tim Valentine, a white candidate who had received only 32.7 percent of the vote in the first round. Other black candidates who lost run-offs after leading the field in the first primary include James Clyburn, who won 43.0 percent of the vote in the first primary for the 1978 Democratic nomination for Secretary of State in South Carolina; and Charles Evers, who won 29.3 percent of the vote in the first primary of a 1968 special election to fill a vacancy in the third congressional district in Mississippi.

It is possible, of course, for the run-off primary to help a black candidate. For example, in a district with a solid black majority, the black vote could be split among several candidates in the first round but coalesce in the second in support of the black front-runner. Such an outcome is possible in three southern congressional districts, Georgia's fifth, Louisiana's second, and Mississippi's second currently represented by Wyche Fowler, Lindy Boggs, and Webb Franklin, respectively.

In fact, some political scientists suggest that as blacks become more successful at winning primaries and elections, it will be increasingly difficult to maintain unity behind a single minority candidate. And similar problems may arise in states that have two different sizable minority populations. In Texas, for example, blacks and Hispanics have often been able to agree on a single candidate in an election, but competition may increase—especially if run-off primaries are eliminated. As more minority candidates seek office, the run-off might well work to the advantage of the minority community. Up to now, however, such instances have been rare.

There is little doubt, then, that runoff primaries hurt the prospects of black candidates under certain circumstances. Where there is white bloc voting and a large but less-than-majority black population, the run-off hurts black candidates. On the other hand, where blacks comprise a solid majority of the population, runoffs clearly do not hurt black candidates. Likewise, where blacks are only a small proportion of the voting population, and white bloc voting is the norm, a run-off system will seldom affect the chance of a black candidate, which will be low to begin with.

6. Do run-off primaries encourage coalition building?

Some supporters of the run-off primary suggest that the run-off might encourage white candidates to seek coalitions across racial lines and thus increase the influence of black voters, even if it does hurt black candidates. They note that in a run-off election between two white candidates, the candidates might compete for the black vote by showing responsiveness to black concerns.

Supporters of run-off primaries sometimes point to examples of moderate or liberal whites who came in second to more conservative whites in first primaries but won run-offs. Mississippi Governor William Winter's victory in 1979 and Lester Maddox's loss in 1974 are frequently cited. There are numerous counter-examples, however—Winter himself would have won the governorship twelve years ago had he not lost a run-off; Lester Maddox launched his career in 1966 by coming from behind in a second primary to beat Ellis Arnall. Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus also got his start by coming from behind in a second primary.

7. Will eliminating run-off primaries result in more successful black candidates?

Speculation on this question has ranged widely. Run-off primary systems, of course, are part of an overall political picture, and if they are eliminated, other parts of the picture will change as well. Without run-offs to ensure white victory, whites may tend to unite behind a single white candidate in the first primary to avoid opening an opportunity for black success. There is some historic evidence that Democratic politics in Virginia and Tennessee, which do not have run-off primaries, is much less factionalized than politics in the southern states that do have run-offs.

Blacks may be encouraged to run in races they had previously considered hopeless; but in some cases, they may run against each other, dividing black votes. Black candidacies would increase black voter participation overall.

Whether blacks who did succeed in capturing the nomination would have a better chance of winning the election has been the subject of much debate. Would whites desert the Democratic party as more blacks win nominations? Since objections to run-off primaries are postulated on the existence of white bloc voting, it is quite possible that many white Democrats would vote Republican rather than support a black Democratic nominee.

8. Do the negative effects of run-offs amount to discrimination against blacks?

Certainly, run-off primaries are not inherently discriminatory against blacks. In a majority-black electorate, for instance, run-offs do not hurt blacks. But such mechanisms as poll taxes, literacy tests, or at-large elections are not inherently discriminatory either. None of these mechanisms can be evaluated apart from the electoral context in which it is used.

The Justice Department, in reviewing changes submitted for preclearance under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, evaluates the potential for discriminatory effects in the context of local circumstances. The burden of proving that the changes do not discriminate is on the local jurisdiction, but the Justice Department has concluded in many instances that run-offs can have a discriminatory effect. For example, in objecting to voting law changes submitted for preclearance in 1978 by Mullins, South Carolina, the Justice Department stated,

> Because of the potential for diluting black voting strength inherent in the use of a majority vote requirement under circumstances such as exist in Mullins and because the city has advanced no compelling reason for its use, we are unable to conclude . . . that the imposition of the majority requirement, in the context of an at-large election system, will not have a racially discriminatory effect.

In a letter responding to a request for reconsideration of the objection, the Justice Department added:

> our analysis of election returns reveals evidence of racial bloc voting, and our research indicates that black candidates may be deterred by the existence of a majority vote requirement.

According to the ACLU, the Justice Department objected to majority-vote requirement under Section 5 (of the Voting Rights Act) in 66 submissions between 1975 and 1980. In most of these cases, the majority-vote requirement was tied to a nonpartisan election, not a partisan primary, and was one of a number of potentially discriminatory electoral arrangements.

In 1981, the Civil Rights Commission also acknowledged the discriminatory effects of majority vote requirements on blacks in the South:

> The effect of this rule majority vote upon minority candidates can be significant, especially in jurisdictions where whites are in a majority and consistently refuse to support minority candidates...Under a majority-vote rule, a run-off with a white candidate in these circumstances would generally result in defeat.

Notable recent elections such as 1983 mayoral election in Chicago demonstrate that plurality primaries can substantially increase the prospects for success by a black candidate. It is in part the contrast between the outcome in Chicago in 1983 and that in North Carolina's 2nd district in 1982 that has heightened concern about the adverse effects of the run-off primary.

9. Does the run-off primary enhance majority rule and the quality of representation?

The run-off primary, with its requirement for nomination by a majority rather than a plurality, appeals to the public's belief in majority rule. And several analysts have attempted to portray it as merely implementing this principle. Others suggest that the requirement increases the chances for the selection of representatives with broad appeal and for excluding extremist candidates.

In fact, however, American politics relies overwhelmingly on plurality elections. Forty of the 50 states and the overwhelming majority of municipalities do not require majority votes either to nominate or to elect candidates.

Moreover, because turnout usually falls off in run-off elections, the winning candidate in the second round sometimes actually receives fewer votes than the front-runner did in the first round. For example, in the 1972 Texas Senatorial primary, turnout dropped by 130,000, and Ralph Yarborough was beaten by Harold Barefoot Sanders even though Yarborough received 25,000 more votes in the first primary than Sanders did in the second. And ironically, the jurisdictions that have insisted on majority vote primaries are the very ones that have historically maintained major barriers to voting.

There is no basis for determining whether the quality of representation is enhanced by the run-off requirement. One might assume that a candidate elected with a majority of the votes cast has the support of a broader segment of the electorate than one who is elected by a plurality. However, given the fall-off in voting that usually occurs in run-off elections, that assumption might not be justified. Furthermore, so many factors affect the quality of representation that it would be imprudent to attach too much weight to a majority vote system as a means of ensuring a high quality of representation.

10. What can be done to eliminate run-off primaries?

Much of the controversy about run-off primaries centers on how to eliminate them, assuming their elimination is desired. Jesse Jackson has been pursuing two avenues. One is political—calling on the presidential candidates and the national Democratic party to take steps to eliminate them. The other is judicial—initiating a suit in the U.S. District Court for Northern Mississippi challenging that state's run-off primary system.

The Political Remedies. Although this approach has received the greatest attention, it is still unclear how effective a presidential candidate, the president, or the national party could be in ending run-off primaries. Any of these could seek federal legislation barring run-off primaries in congressional elections. Congress probably cannot mandate changes in state or local election laws, but such federal legislation might pressure states to bring their practices in line with federal election practices—if only for administrative convenience. However, the prospect of federal legislation against run-off primaries is very slim. There is no evidence of widespread discomfort with run-off elections, and the issue could easily create splits along regional lines.

National party officials and the candidates could also try to persuade state party officials to seek to change state laws, but this is probably even more unlikely. It is also possible that state political parties might be able to abandon run-off primaries even in states that mandate them.

Using the Courts. The Supreme Court has ruled that majority vote requirements are not *per se* unconstitutional, and recent Court interpretations of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments would make constitutional challenges very difficult.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, however, as amended in 1982, explicitly prohibits election laws or procedures that have the intent or *effect* of discriminating against minorities. The legislative history of the amendment explicitly lists the majority vote requirement as one sign of a racially discriminatory electoral system. And although there has never been a court decision solely and specifically on the majority vote requirement, courts have repeatedly recognized its place in the constellation of discriminatory devices. Thus, while the Voting Rights Act does not ban all run-offs, most run-offs would probably be found to violate the act, given the specific electoral contexts in which they are used.

But Section 2 litigation is a complex and expensive process that can drag on for years. Furthermore, it is unclear how universally applicable any ruling would be, given the "totality of circumstances" that has to be shown in each case. It is hardly the choice avenue for combating voting rights violations. Section 5 can be used to prevent changes in current laws, but it has no power over laws in effect before 1965, when the Voting Rights Act was first passed.

11. What are the alternatives to run-off primaries?

The most obvious alternative is the plurality system, which is the system used in most elections in the United States and preferred by most opponents to run-off primaries.

Some have proposed a 40 percent rule. Under this rule, a run-off would be held if no candidate received more than 40 percent of the vote. Proponents argue that a 40 percent showing indicates a substantial base of support, shutting out fringe candidates and enhancing the prospects of minority candidates in some cases. The "40 Percent Solution" is a political compromise that appears to have some support in the Democratic party.

12. What are the political implications of change?

There is considerable speculation about the effects that change in the run-off primary would have on minorities, on the political parties, and on national politics. These speculations range from sharp increases in the number of black elected officials to massive party realignment in the south—or both. But the issue is complex; several types of change are possible; and other features of local politics would almost certainly change if primaries are eliminated. It is therefore virtually impossible to do much more than identify a number of possible outcomes.

If election procedures are modified by the adoption of thresholds below 50 percent beyond which a run-off would not be required, the opportunities for minorities to win nominations would probably increase slightly with little impact on existing patterns of partisan support. Elimination of all run-off primaries might open up greatly increased opportunities for black candidates, but might also produce major changes in partisan support and in the prospects for the black candidates to win elective offices.

The principal beneficiaries of the current run-off system are white Democratic candidates in white-majority jurisdictions with substantial black populations. They would stand to lose if these primaries were eliminated or altered. If changes occur amid great controversy, and if southern white Democratic voters attach more weight to race than to partisanship, the Democratic party might be another major loser, as whites defect to Republican candidates. Such defections could be short-lived, but they could permit the Republican party to develop a grass-roots base that it does not now enjoy in the south.

Of more immediate concern to some analysts are the likely effects of change on the 1984 presidential race. The run-off primary is viewed by some observers as a black issue of dubious merit, and major concessions on this issue by the Democratic party, such as a forthright call for the elimination of run-off primaries, could enrage Democrats who already feel that the party is too sympathetic to minorities. Were such perceptions widespread in the South, Democratic candidates' chances for success could be reduced.

On the other hand, failure to address the issue might produce substantial black disenchantment with the Democratic party in 1984 and discourage turnout. Failure to be sensitive to the concerns of blacks on this issue could be as devastating to the Democratic party as failure to be sensitive to the concerns of whites.

In spite of the uncertainties and obvious risks reform poses, the issue is unlikely to disappear. The Justice Department and some southern politicians had been examining second primaries before the issue was raised on by Jesse Jackson. By focusing national attention on it, the Jackson candidacy ensures continued attention well after November.

The Historical Origins of the Run-off Primary

by J. Morgan Kousser

(Dr. Kousser is professor of history and social science at the California Institute of Technology.)

Was the adoption of the run-off primary part of a general "progressive" move to democratize elections, or was it an episode in a reactionary crusade to eliminate any chance of black influence in politics by perpetuating one-party rule?

Under the 1982 amendments to the Voting Rights Act

and the Supreme Court's 1982 opinion in *Rogers* v. *Lodge*—its most recent major pronouncement on standards in "minority vote dilution" litigation—the prime judicial criterion for evaluating such devices as the run-off primary system will be their *effect* on the political power of racial minorities, not the *intent* of the framers or perpetuators of the laws. Nonetheless, a knowledge of the historical context in which the run-off system was adopted is still pertinent in lawsuits and may help to shape public attitudes toward abandoning or retaining the system.

Since historians have only recently turned any attention at all to the intent behind the run-off system, all the available evidence is circumstantial. But we can confidently say that direct primaries were adopted in the South at least partially to maintain white Democratic supremacy and that the run-off, adopted along with primaries themselves, functioned as a further guarantee of the partisan and racial status quo.

From Conventions to Primaries

In the post-Reconstruction South, turnout was above 60 percent of the adult southern males—including black males—during the 1880s, and the Republican, independent, and later, Populist threats to Democratic dominance remained quite real. In the 1880 presidential contest, for instance, a majority of black men are estimated to have voted in 9 of the 11 ex-Confederate states, and in 10 of those, they managed to have a majority of their votes counted for the Republican party, which they overwhelmingly supported. The South was far from "solid" yet.

Any significant bolt of whites from the Democratic or "white man's" party could well lead to defeats—and to the assumption of power by blacks and their white allies—at the local or even the state level. In Virginia, for instance, a coalition of blacks and hill-country whites, led by a Democrat discontented with his defeat in a boss-controlled party convention, ruled the state from 1879 to 1883.

The primary was recognized and touted as a minimizer of bolts. Thus, in 1878, the chairman of the Alabama Democratic Executive Committee proposed that delegates to the state convention be selected in primaries "to promote harmony... and to prevent as far as possible the occurrence of combinations injurious to the party. A Tuskegee Democratic newspaper thought the primary "the only thing that can unite and hold the party together."

Deeply divided over the question of continuing the corrupt state lottery company in 1892, Louisiana Democrats settled their differences in the first statewide primary ever held, as far as I know, in the United States. That it was limited to whites and that it came at the time of a very serious Populist and Republican challenge to Democratic control should give pause to those who picture the primary as a well-intentioned, racially neutral device to expand popular control. Likewise, in the same year, South Carolina Democrats kept the bitter split between Ben Tillman and his "conservative" opponents within the confines of the party by electing convention delegates in primaries coordinated throughout the state.

In 1895, the South Carolina Democratic Convention called for a constitutional convention to disfranchise as many blacks as possible by law; at the same time, the Democrats passed a party rule requiring nominations for state offices from 1896 on to be made by direct primaries. In case no candidate received a majority, the party provided for a run-off primary. Ben Tillman, who dominated both the party and constitutional conventions, selected the primary, according to his biographer, "as the most satisfactory means of allaying discontent within the Democratic ranks and of reducing the danger of political appeal to the Negro."

There were no other statewide direct primaries in the South (or elsewhere in the nation) during the 1890s. By 1902, when Mississippi became the first state in the Union to require, by law, the primary method of nomination for all non-judicial state officers, disfranchising conventions or constitutional amendments had severely reduced black—and poor white—voting in all eleven southern states. Since direct primaries in general and the run-off in particular were, except in South Carolina, mandated only *after* 1900, could they have had any racial intent? Since most blacks were disfranchised by then, wasn't the situation "race proof?"

Were Primaries and Run-offs Aimed Against Blacks?

The most obvious answer is that very little in the South since 1619 has been devoid of racial motives. Perhaps less obviously, the "race proof" argument depends on hindsight. When primaries, often with run-off provisions, were adopted by Democratic party rule or by law in the early part of this century, it was by no means so clear as it seemed later that party competition and black participation in politics were doomed for a half century. Furthermore, we should not underestimate either the continuing extent of black voting or the degree of southern white antipathy in the "lily white period" to any black political activity whatsoever.

That white racism has been one of the central themes of southern history is familiar enough not to need documentation. The perceived fragility of the disfranchisement settlement, however, must be shown.

According to a North Carolina editor who surveyed opinion in 1899 in three states that had held disfranchising conventions, "without the legal primary, divisions among white men might result in bringing about a return to the deplorable conditions when one faction of white men call upon the Negroes to help defeat another faction." After all, fairly administered literacy tests and funds to pay the poll taxes of potential voters could easily have enfranchised a majority of the blacks in any southern state in the early twentieth century, and Democrats feared that the self-interest of opposition politicians might, as it had during Reconstruction and the Populist eras, overcome their devotion to white supremacy. Moreover, southern moves to subvert the purposes of the Fifteenth Amendment never received the sanction of the U.S. Supreme Court, but only its agreement, in effect, not to overthrow the restrictive laws, a modus vivendi that lasted only from 1903 to 1915, when the Court overturned the Oklahoma "grandfather clause."

Furthermore, the number of blacks who were registered to vote after "disfranchisement" was small, but not negligible—9 percent in Mississippi in 1896, and 14-15 percent in South Carolina and Virginia in 1904. In certain areas, blacks might be able to elect one or more officials. Some whites, in a period when lynchings were public carnivals, were genuinely horrified by the slightest deviation from complete black subordination. More importantly, opportunistic politicians could be depended upon to whip up any racial issue for their own purposes.

Nor were blacks wholly barred from the largely locally regulated "white" primaries. In 1899 at least 200 blacks voted in a Democratic primary in one Mississippi county, and, as one historian concluded about that state as a whole, "Negroes had not been eliminated from the polls but were playing the same part a decade after [the Mississippi disfranchising convention of 1890] that they had played for a dozen or fifteen years before its adoption." The Little Rock, Arkansas, Democratic Central Committee turned down a white-only primary resolution in 1901, and Arkansas primaries became fully Caucasian only as a result of the actions of the deeply racist governor, Jeff Davis, in 1906. Aware that open, legal exclusion of blacks from the primaries would bring the risk of court action, no state before Texas in 1923 wrote a white-only provision into the law. All acted by party rule; they usually gave local Democratic committees discretion on the matter; and

some areas never established utterly white primaries.

There was, then, an incentive for white Southern Democrats in the early 1900s to seek to reinforce the exclusion of blacks from electoral power.

The Mississippi legislature passed a bill imposing a primary and containing a run-off requirement in 1902. "The salvation of our State," backers of a primary with a run-off contended, "depends on the unity of our white people. This vote can only be secured by ascertaining and effectuating the choice of [the] majority, to the exclusion of Negroes." That white Democratic party hegemony was a prime motive for the adoption of the primary in Mississippi was also openly avowed by the chief sponsor of the 1902 law, Edmund F. Noel, in a 1904 article: "White supremacy could be maintained only by the members of that race remaining together politically, otherwise comparatively few Negroes who are qualified to vote might wield the balance of power. No political organization can long be kept from factional contests, without confidence in the fairness of its methods of ascertaining and carrying into effect the will of the majority. . . . Conventions or mass meetings as the ultimate method of expressing popular choice would not be tolerated in any civilized community. . ."

In 1901, Florida provided by statute for a non-mandatory primary containing a run-off provision. The Alabama Democratic Executive Committee, which set temporary rules for each election, provided for run-offs in 1902 and 1914. South Carolina conducted run-off elections by party regulation from 1896 on, and wrote the provision into law in 1915. Texas in 1903 and 1905 required primaries for state offices by law, but left it up to the party whether or not to declare a majority or plurality vote sufficient. In 1907, the legislature specified a plurality win system; much later, it reinstated the run-off system. The Louisiana legislature passed a majority-vote requirement in 1906. After a particularly racially demagogic gubernatorial campaign in Georgia in 1906, the convention delegates elected in the indirect primary for governor backed not only a constitutional convention to restrict black suffrage, but also Georgia's first statewide direct primary. Its run-off provision was modified two years later to provide that the candidate had to receive a majority of the "county unit" vote. Tennessee Democrats authorized a primary in 1908, and a run-off requirement in 1909, but after the law as a whole was voided by the courts, the majority clause was dropped. North Carolina mandated statewide primaries with a majority vote proviso in 1915.

Neither historians nor political scientists have investigated the intent of the original framers specifically on run-off requirements. There is likely to be little direct evidence about their purpose, since they were often adopted at non-public party executive committee meetings, and even in cases when they were written into law, the surviving evidence from state legislative records will probably not be conclusive. None of the southern state assemblies recorded debates or printed committee reports; newspaper stories on any but the most controversial amendments are usually uninformative; and few legislators left collections of their papers. There was lots of press discussion about the general principles of primaries and conventions, but little on such specific topics as the run-off.

Popular discussions stressed not only the party-strengthening features of primaries, but also the shift in control toward "the people"—loyal white Democrats—which the primary allegedly fostered. These two purposes were, of course, completely complimentary. Had the primary not quieted protests against clique or "ring" domination, it would not have been an effective means of confining dissent within the Democratic party.

The indirect evidence from the pattern of adoptions of the run-offs suggests that the racial motives for choosing the device were hardly absent. South Carolina, which had the largest proportion of blacks of any state in 1900, was the first to put the statewide primary and the run-off into regular use. The South Carolina Democratic convention that proposed the scheme also called for state constitutional action to disfranchise blacks. Mississippi, which had the second largest percentage of blacks, became the first state to mandate the run-off primary by law, and Alabama acted by party rule in the same year. Florida, still over 40 percent black at the turn of the century, held its first run-off in 1904, and Louisiana, third in black proportion, acted by law in 1906. Among the eleven ex-Confederate states, only Arkansas in the Deep South and the border state of Virginia, its machine and anti-machine factions solidified early, never instituted the double primary during the first two decades of this century. No northern state, not even such uncompetitive ones as Maine, Vermont, and Kansas, ever experimented with run-off primaries.

In sum, then, the run-off should be seen as a device intended to strengthen the primary itself as a means of solidifying the southern Democratic parties against opposition, and particularly opposition by blacks or through appeals to blacks.

SOUTHERN VOTER REGISTRATION, 1980-84

At last, up-to-date registration figures for the South are available. They show clearly the upsurge in black registration—especially in contrast to the mixed picture for whites.

	White Registration			Black Registration		
State	1980	1984	Change	1980	1984	Change
Alabama	1,700,000	1,664,000	−36,000	350,000	482,000	+132,000
Arkansas	1,056,000	964,000	−92,000	130,000	155,000	+25,000
Florida	4,331,000	4,337,000	+6,000	489,000	517,000	+28,000
Georgia	1,800,000	1,787,000	−13,000	450,000	512,000	+62,000
Louisiana	1,550,000	1,609,000	+59,000	465,000	535,000	+70,000
Mississippi	1,152,000	1,144,000	−8,000	330,000	406,000	+76,000
No. Carolina	2,314,000	2,369,000	+55,000	440,000	565,000	+125,000
So. Carolina	916,000	848,000	−68,000	320,000	331,000	+11,000
Tennessee	2,200,000	2,082,000	−118,000	300,000	348,000	+48,000
Texas	6,020,000	6,042,000	+22,000	620,000	720,000	+100,000
Virginia	1,942,000	1,908,000	−34,000	360,000	378,000	+18,000
Total	24,981,000	24,754,000	−227,000	4,254,000	4,949,000	+695,000

Source: Data from *American Political Report,* May 18, 1984. Some data from the Voter Education Project.

The Debt of Developing Nations

by Toni Schmiegelow

(The author is a lending officer at Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company in New York.)

Nearly 100 African, Asian, and Latin American nations together owe at least $700 billion to banks in the industrial world—a sum more than double the value of the capital controlled by these banks. This debt has become the subject of considerable attention for several reasons: concern that the international banking system may fail if these loans are not repaid; uncertainty about the credit-worthiness of Third World countries; and fear that the banks may refuse to extend additional credit to these countries. In some quarters the situation is viewed as a crisis.

Bail-out or Good Business?

According to international economist John P. Lewis, a former member of the Council of Economic Advisors, the international banking system is in no danger of collapse. Lewis's optimism is based on several countermeasures being taken to remedy the situation. For example, when Argentina recently neared default on its $500 million interest payments, representatives of U.S. banks, the Treasury Department, and the International Monetary Fund, along with Argentina and other Latin American countries, hammered out an eleventh-hour solution. Their plan called for Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, and Columbia to put up $300 million, with repayment guaranteed by the U.S. Treasury Department, provided Argentina reached agreement with the International Monetary Fund on reorganizing its economy. To complete the package, Argentina agreed to contribute $100 million from its own foreign exchange reserves, and 11 major banks, 5 American and 6 foreign, offered to loan Argentina $100 million at extremely low interest rates.

In another countermeasure, Congress passed a bill in November 1983 that increased by $8.4 billion the U.S. contribution to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Congressional Quarterly described this measure as Congress' "biggest legislative deal of 1983," because it combined in a single bill the increased contribution to the IMF, which the Reagan administration wanted, and a $15.6 billion housing authorization sought by Democrats. This odd linkage resulted from protracted negotiations involving House and Senate leaders and administration officials, most notably White House Budget Director David A. Stockman and Treasury Secretary Donald T. Regan. The final compromise attests to the importance the administration attached to its objective in the deliberations: in order to secure the IMF funding, the White House accepted a housing bill it otherwise opposed.

Opponents of the increased funding have branded it a bail-out of big American banks, which will lose billions if loans they made to the Third World are not repaid. Critics argue that these institutions alone should shoulder the risks inherent in their business and charge that the funding measure was drafted to ensure major U.S. banks a handsome profit, since Third World countries will use the IMF funds to repay high-interest loans.

The Reagan administration and other supporters of the IMF increase hold that Third World countries are dependent on the fund's resources to prevent economic collapse and, further, that U.S. exporters require the maintenance of stable economies in these countries to ensure markets for their goods.

Another, occasional, remedy for Third World debt problems is so-called "bridge financing," short-term financing arranged by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), a Swiss-based institution whose purpose is to foster international monetary cooperation. When a debtor nation is unable to make scheduled repayments and requests debt rescheduling and additional loans from the IMF, BIS secures short-term loans for that nation from the central banks of various industrialized nations. These loans are repaid immediately with a portion of the new IMF funds. This measure was used recently in both Mexico and Brazil.

Lewis also points to other, more permanent solutions to the debt crisis through structural changes in debtor nations to balance spending and revenues. Such changes include devaluation of national currencies, reductions in imports and domestic food subsidies, and the scaling down of many state-run organizations, airlines and steel industries among them. But this approach assumes—implausibly—that it is possible to enforce severe belt-tightening policies in countries where belts are already tight without causing serious and perhaps dangerous political problems.

In the long run, such structural changes will have to be accompanied by a more even balance of trade between developing and industrialized nations. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has noted that this combination would lessen the risk of political upheavals and put Third World countries in a better position to repay their debt, thereby reducing the risk of a worldwide banking crisis.

Repayment Problems

Were Third World countries more credit-worthy years ago when the banks extended so much credit? Or were the banks, newly flush with OPEC cash, over-eager to turn these abundant deposits into profit-making loans? Treasury Secretary Donald T. Regan is inclined toward the first alternative; he sees the current problem not as a sudden development but as a result of economic policies followed over the past two decades.

Others—including some members of Congress who opposed the increased IMF funding and some bankers—attribute the present situation to the greed of major banks. One group of former bankers complained to *Businessweek* magazine that they were pressured into making loans to Third World countries because growth and profits from such loans had already been budgeted. The chief Latin American economist for a major New York bank recalled that the bank went ahead with loans to Brazil even after he advised his chairman that Brazil's appetite for foreign loans was excessive.

In either case, during the inflationary times of the 1970s, most less-developed countries (LDCs) were able to borrow large amounts of money easily, which they did. They borrowed primarily from large commercial banks in the industrial countries, and by the middle of 1982, non-OPEC developing countries had run up debts of over $500 billion—more than

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Telescope

Glenn Watts Joins JCPS Board of Governors

The Joint Center for Political Studies' newest board member, Glenn E. Watts, is president of the Communications Workers of America and has been actively involved with the union for more than 40 years. He is chairman of the AFL-CIO's public relations committee and co-chair of the Democratic National Committee's Labor Advisory Council. Watts is a trustee of the Ford Foundation; president of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (an organization of communications workers throughout the world); and secretary-treasurer of the American Institute for Free Labor Development.

Conference on "The Civil Rights Act: Two Decades Later"

The Joint Center will host a conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act on June 28th and 29th at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. The Conference will consist of three parts: "Basic Goals and Public Attitudes" will be discussed on Thursday morning; "The Effects of the Civil Rights Act," on Thursday afternoon; and "Politics, Coalitions, and Civil Rights," on Friday morning. See Perspective for some details on the program. Attendance is free; for further information, call 202 626-3533

Youth Service USA, Inc.

In communities across the country, the military is working with business, government, and civilian sectors to provide socioeconomically disadvantaged youth with job skills, under a program called Youth Service USA, Inc. The program is unlike many other job training efforts in that community-based organizations often coordinate the programs, using the services of others in the community to carry out program activities: local businesses provide jobs to graduates; the military volunteers in-kind contributions (such as use of the military base), services, and training; schools provide education and technical skills; and foundations, corporations, and state and local governments provide funds to support the program. Students receive on-the-job training in learning the skills to become auto mechanics, equipment operators, electronic technicians, CRT (cathode ray tube) operators, secretaries, and photographers.

The program was started in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1963, when a social service agency began to take groups of youngsters camping in the state parks around the city. Years later—as a way to keep youngsters off the streets during the summer after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated—the program requested and was granted use of the vast recreational facilities—swimming pools, lakes, gymnasiums, bowling alleys, horses—of the Naval Air Station north of Memphis. The effort was enormously successful, and the program quickly expanded from purely recreational activities to include job training. Other cities soon began to organize similar efforts at their local military installations.

Youth Service USA hopes to expand the program nationwide and is looking for civilian groups and businesses that may be interested in becoming involved. For more information, contact Director of Development, Youth Service USA, Inc., Youth Service Bldg., 314 South Goodlett St., Memphis, Tenn. 38117; telephone (901) 454-4900.

Debt

(Continued from page 10)

five times their foreign debt level of 1973. Then conditions changed.

Repayment problems were brought on by several factors: sharp increases in the price of oil, which required the LDCs to borrow even more; general inflation, which led to higher interest rates on this increasing debt; and then a worldwide depression, which thwarted the LDCs' expectations that inflation would allow them to sell their goods for higher prices. An oil glut also reduced the revenues of oil-exporting LDCs. For all LDCs, then, debt continued to increase and the ability to repay decreased.

Needed: A "North-South" Dialogue

The need for a solution to the problem of Third World debt has focused increased attention on the "North-South" dialogue, a term used to describe aid and trade negotiations that have been going on since the early 1960s between LDCs and wealthy industrialized nations. (Most LDCs lie south of the Equator; most wealthy nations are found in the northern latitudes.) Initiated by the LDCs and held under the auspices of UNCTAD, these discussions have focused on ways of creating higher prices and a more open market for commodities such as sugar, coffee, and cocoa that are exported from the South to the North.

These issues came to a head after the countries in the South found that prices for oil and manufactured goods—products they needed to import—were rising disproportionately to the prices their exports were able to command. In some cases, industrialized nations had set up protectionist measures that made the LDCs' commodities less competitive and created a trade situation in which LDCs spent more than they were earning. To finance this trade deficit, these countries were obligated to borrow from commercial banks or seek alternative forms of aid from the wealthy nations, which only increased the original imbalance.

To remedy this imbalance, the North-South negotiators have been considering the establishment of a new international financial system. The South favors the creation of a commodity cartel, modeled on the OPEC oil cartel, which would allow Third World nations to control prices and distribution.

In the past, the LDCs have employed a strategy of confrontation at the discussion table. Recently, however, a new, more moderate tack has guided their talks. The LDCs have also shifted their focus from broad-reaching structural changes to more specific, immediate objectives such as automatic debt relief, an increase in world liquidity through the International Monetary Fund, greater aid and private bank lending to developing nations, and freer access to northern markets for their exports.

This approach may well have been devised to take advantage of the developed world's concern about a banking crisis. The industrialized world has acknowledged its interdependency with LDCs: it needs both their exports and their markets, and the banking system of the developed nations has become inextricably linked to the economic health of the Third World. This recognition of interdependency on the part of both North and South bodes well for genuine progress in resolving the debt and trade problems plaguing the Third World.

The Folly of the Subminimum Wage

by Bernard Anderson

(Dr. Anderson is director of the division of social sciences of the Rockefeller Foundation.)

The Reagan administration has submitted legislation to Congress adopting a subminimum wage as a device for reducing teenage unemployment. The National Conference of Black Mayors has endorsed the idea. This unusual combination has contributed to growing interest in this approach.

The available evidence, however, suggests that a subminimum wage would reduce neither overall youth unemployment nor minority youth unemployment in particular. A subminimum wage is bad economic policy and abominable social policy.

Many economists argue that minimum wage legislation greatly reduces youth opportunities and is especially harmful to minority group teenagers. And indeed, youth unemployment has drifted upward during the past several decades as the federal minimum wage rose to the current level of $3.35 an hour. But to attribute the increase in youth unemployment entirely to the increase in the minimum wage would be like suggesting that the Georgetown University NCAA basketball championship was generated by the enthusiasm of Hoya fans. Obviously, other factors were also involved.

The rise in teenage unemployment has been influenced by the dramatic increase in the size of the youth and female labor forces, competition from the increasing number of immigrant workers, the declining number of semi-skilled jobs in urban areas, and the changing technology of production. Rising teenage unemployment is also related to the upward drift of unemployment for the labor force as a whole, which averaged 4.8 percent during the 1960s, 6.2 percent during the 1970s, and 8.1 percent since 1980.

The congressionally mandated Minimum Wage Study Commission conducted several careful studies of the effects of minimum wages on youth employment, and in its final report concluded that a subminimum wage would not reduce teenage unemployment significantly and would do little to increase employment among economically disadvantaged, minority-group teenagers.

The experience under the Youth Incentive Employment Entitlement (YIEE) program supported by the U.S. Department of Labor from 1978 through 1980 also casts doubts on the potential for a subminimum wage to generate more private sector jobs for disadvantaged youth. Under the entitlement program, employers were reimbursed for all wage and benefit costs for hiring economically disadvantaged teenagers who agreed to remain in or return to school. The private sector hired only 21 percent of the 76,000 youths employed in the 17 communities in which the program operated. If private employers are reluctant to hire youth at *no* cost, it is difficult to believe substantially more jobs will be created by a reduction in the minimum wage.

The black mayors say it is time to experiment, and it is easy to sympathize with their frustration and desire for a solution to the continuing problem of youth unemployment. But experiments have already been done. In the last year of the YIEE, a demonstration project designed to test the effect of different subminimum wages was conducted in Baltimore and Detroit. It showed that only 1 in 10 firms eligible to employ teenagers at 25 percent of the minimum wage—and only 1 in 20 eligible to hire them at 50 percent of the minimum—actually hired low-income youth. Only about 18 percent of the firms eligible for a 100 percent wage subsidy hired a low-income teenager.

Many suggest that youth should be employed at subminimum wages to give them the training and experience necessary to increase their productivity. But, in fact, little or no useful training or experience can be obtained in the marginal, dead-end jobs likely to be filled by teenagers hired at the subminimum-wage level. Many such jobs that do offer the minimum wage now go begging because of poor working conditions and lack of opportunity for training and advancement.

The new Jobs Training Partnership Act holds much more promise of providing the kind of training and work experience youth need to get a foothold in

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