Volume 20, No. 5 May 1992

FOCUS

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

Playing the Race Card

The Racially Motivated Policies of Some Presidents Have Deprived Blacks of Full Equality and Social Justice

Prisoners of the Drug War

Are Boot Camps Being Used to Rehabilitate Young Offenders Or Are They Just Traditional Prisons With Marching Drills?

High Risk Homes and Educational Failure

Poverty and Single Parent Homes Are Among the Risk Factors That Contribute to the Poor Educational Performance of Many Children

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

ISSN 0740-0195

PRICE $1.50

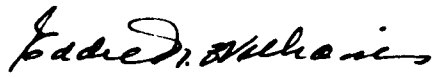
Sitting on a Fault, Waiting for Disaster

When four white police officers delivered more than 50 blows of their nightsticks to one unarmed, defenseless black man, they dealt a crippling blow to the black community's faith in the law enforcement system. Despite black Americans' horror at the videotaped scene of violence, they trusted the nation's justice system to right the wrong that had been done. The acquittal verdict from a panel of jurors in Simi Valley, California expanded the assault on King and shattered an entire nation's faith in justice. That verdict sends two unfortunate messages: For those who wear the uniform of the law, the message is that anything goes; for those whose only badge is their skin color, the message is that justice from the police and the courts is not always forthcoming.

The violence done to Rodney King on the street and in the courtroom triggered a disastrous and unforgivable conflagration. Disasters are not uncommon in Los Angeles—floods, mud slides, brush fires, and, since much of the city lies on a massive underground fault, earthquakes are frequent if unwelcome visitors. While these natural disasters cause damage and somtimes claim lives, they are seldom as costly in human life or property as the riots in South-Central Los Angeles.

The greatest tragedy of all is that we are asking ourselves the same questions that were asked in the aftermath of the Watts riot a quarter of a century ago: What caused the riots? What can be done to prevent this from happening again? Ironically, the answers are the same now as they were then. The underlying causes of the riots were racial alienation, poverty, unemployment, neglect, and hopelessness. Sadly, these conditions still exist in many urban communities. What is most alarming is that from political and business leaders down to ordinary citizens, the social and economic problems that form preconditions for civil unrest are too often viewed as some massive underground fault that can't be fixed. The truth is that man-made disasters, unlike natural disasters such as earthquakes, can be anticipated and prevented!

But vision, leadership, and action are required in equal amounts. Also, in the near term, there must be a full investigation of the growing crisis of unequal justice in America. Confidence that justice is for all Americans must be restored. Meanwhile, most Americans must be about the business of healing this nation's deep racial and ethnic divides. Our public policies must have both moral force and the financial clout to address real problems. We must fully reinvest in time tested and effective programs that work like Head Start, compensatory education programs, the Job Corps, pre-natal care, and child nutrition. Other proposals are on the table such as trading college tuition for community service, raising teachers' pay, and enterprise zones with provisions to provide venture capital to minority entrepreneurs. Bipartisan leadership is needed, and those who are the victims of the urban crisis must be invited to help determine the solutions to the crisis. It should now be painfully clear that if we neglect front end needs, we will be manufacturing future disasters with costly back end results. We must not go through another 25 years sitting on a fault and waiting for another disaster to happen. ■



PRESIDENT

FOCUS Copyright © 1991 Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Inc. The monthly magazine of the **Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies,** 1301 Pa. Ave., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20004 (202) 626-3500. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is a national, nonprofit, tax-exempt institution that conducts research on public policy issues of special concern to black Americans and promotes informed and effective involvement of blacks in the governmental process. Founded in 1970, the Joint Center provides independent and nonpartisan analyses through research, publication, and outreach programs. Opinions expressed in signed *FOCUS* articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. *FOCUS* is published monthly. $15.00 per year by JCPES, Inc.

PRESIDENT/Eddie N. Williams
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT/Eleanor Farrar
VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT/Kathleen Vander Horst
VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION/Brenda Watkins Noel
VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH/Milton Morris
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE/Russell Owens
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS/Nancy Stella

EDITOR, *FOCUS*/David C. Ruffin
SENIOR EDITOR/Marc DeFrancis
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR/Odessa Maria Archibald
PRODUCTION MANAGER/Tyra Wright
TRENDLETTER RESEARCHER/Alfred Baltimore
WORD PROCESSOR/Merlinda Ceniza Novicio

BOARD OF GOVERNORS
Andrew F. Brimmer/Brimmer and Company, Inc., *Chair*
Luther H. Foster/Alexandria, Virginia, *Vice Chair*
George L. Brown/Lipsen, Whitten & Diamond, *Treasurer*
Eddie N. Williams/Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, *President*
Bishop John Hurst Adams/Senior Bishop, A.M.E. Church
Norma Ketay Asnes/Ketay Asnes Productions
Hannah D. Atkins/University of Central Oklahoma
Julian C. Dixon/U.S. House of Representatives
Elsie H. Hillman/Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Hector M. Hyacinthe/ Packard Frank Businesss and Corporate Interiors
Vernon E. Jordan, Jr./Akin, Gump, Hauer & Feld
Robert M. Kavner/AT&T
Bertram M. Lee, Sr./WKYS-FM
Robert M. McGlotten/AFL-CIO
Richard H. Newhouse/Esquire, Chicago, Illinois
Bernard Rapoport/American Income Life Insurance Company
Lois D. Rice/Brookings Institution
Sharon Percy Rockefeller/WETA-TV/FM
Audrey Rowe/Department of Income Maintenance, State of Connecticut
Pauline A. Schneider/Hunton & Williams
LeBaron Taylor/Sony Software Corporation
Felker W. Ward, Jr./Ward and Associates, Inc.

Members Emeriti: William B. Boyd, Kenneth B. Clark, Louis E. Martin, Robert C. Maynard, James D. Wolfensohn

Eleanor Farrar/Secretary to the Board

Playing the Race Card

The Racially Motivated Policies of Some Presidents Have Deprived Blacks of Full Equality and Social Justice

by David C. Ruffin

The Rodney King trial and its aftermath should serve as a reminder to the nation's leadership that we neglect at our peril the continuing exclusion of minorities from full participation in this society. America's ugliest traditions—racism, ethnic hatred, and cultural intolerance—have been prominent and destructive forces in our society since the founding of our democracy.

Americans of color—black, red, yellow, and brown, many of them still victims of racially motivated abuse and violence—have always struggled for true equality and fair treatment. Yet efforts by the nation's leaders to include non-whites as full citizens into the American enterprise have been relatively recent and inconsistent. How this tragic legacy of racism has played out in national politics can be seen through a brief review of the relationship between black Americans and U.S. presidents.

Turning a Blind Eye to Lynching

In the 19th century, proponents of slavery and abolition waged political battles that frequently spilled over into electoral politics and culminated in the presidential campaign of Abraham Lincoln in 1860. As the North and South were locked in the Civil War, Lincoln's initial goal was to restore the Union even at the cost of continuing slavery. As the war dragged on, he freed the slaves both out of magnanimity and to deprive the South of their labor. The Emancipation Proclamation and the postwar constitutional amendments that granted blacks full citizenship rights turned the newly enfranchised African-American voters into devoted supporters of the GOP, the "Party of Lincoln."

Despite their mandated freedoms, blacks were relegated to second class citizenship throughout the Reconstruction era, and became the targets of vicious attacks by white mobs. According to W.E.B. Du Bois, 1,700 black people were lynched in America between 1885 and 1894. Such atrocities continued into this century, but Republican presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft turned a blind eye to the violence.

By the time of the presidential election in 1912, the relationship between blacks and the GOP was wearing thin. That year, leaders of the African Zion Church, aware that blacks were handicapped by keeping all of their political eggs in one basket, moved to expand their options. They enlisted the help of Du Bois, then editor of the influential *Crisis* magazine, in support of the candidacy of Democrat Woodrow Wilson. In exchange, Wilson expressed his "earnest wish to see justice done to the colored people in every matter...." and promised that "they may count upon me for absolute fair dealing, for everything by which I could assist in advancing the interests of their race." As a result, an estimated 100,000 northern blacks voted for Wilson.

But once in office, the president reneged on his pledge of "fair dealing" with black Americans. In 1915, African-Americans experienced some of the harshest brutality since the end of the Civil War. Wilson refused to take any action to ameliorate black suffering. He even went so far as to issue an executive order to segregate the U.S. Post Office and other federal agencies.

Closing the Citizenship Gap

It was not until Franklin Delano Roosevelt's second election campaign in 1936 that blacks would again attempt to break ranks with the Republican Party in significant numbers. They not only supported a Democrat for president, but indeed, ran for office themselves as Democrats. FDR openly reached out to African-American voters, and as the Great Depression of the '30s wore on, he made good on his promise to extend his New Deal programs to blacks.

However, just before U.S. entry into World War II, FDR had to be pressured to enforce antidiscrimination employment practices in defense industries. In 1941, A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and a powerful black leader with national influence, threatened to march on Washington at the head of 100,000 black protesters. Roosevelt conceded and issued Executive Order 8802 barring discrimination in defense industries and in the federal government.

Responsiveness by presidents to the nation's racial problems was to reach its zenith in the 1960s. During the 1960 presidential campaign, John F. Kennedy made a public and politically risky telephone call to Coretta Scott King, whose husband Martin Luther King had been arrested and jailed in Atlanta for joining student sit-ins at

(Continued on page 4)

Mr. Ruffin is editor of *FOCUS*.

Race

(Continued from page 3)

segregated restaurants. Occurring in the midst of the volatile national civil rights struggle, JFK's campaign manager and brother, Robert Kennedy, angrily declared that John Kennedy had thrown away any chances for election with his telephone call to Mrs. King. The candidate's political instincts, however, proved to be right. The call sent a strong signal to African-Americans that Kennedy was sympathetic to their quest for civil rights and first-class citizenship. Kennedy went on to defeat Richard Nixon in the election, and shortly after taking office, submitted sweeping civil rights legislation to Congress.

After Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, took up the civil rights agenda and used his power and considerable political skill to move the Civil Rights Act of 1964 through the Congress. The measure was highly controversial because it proposed to end segregation in public accommodations, outlaw employment discrimination, and prohibit bias in federally funded programs.

In the spring of 1964, the House of Representatives passed the Act, H.R. 7152, by a two-thirds majority with 138 Republicans joining 152 Democrats in voting "yea." The Senate passed the measure with an equally strong, bipartisan vote of 73 to 27. Hubert Humphrey, Senate Democratic whip and the bill's floor manager declared, "The purpose of this bill is to close the citizenship gap in this country," adding that,..."America has been weakened because we haven't given full opportunity to all of our people...." Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, the GOP presidential candidate, voted against the Act charging that the bill would "require the creation of a federal police force of mammoth proportions" and engender an "informer psychology" in the work place. But he and his position on the subject were buried in a Johnson election landslide.

The Pendulum Swings Back

In more recent elections, Republican presidential candidates have won the White House sweepstakes, in part, by playing the race card and polarizing the electorate. In 1968, Richard Nixon, referring to riot-torn black communities, vowed to restore "law and order" in a thinly veiled message that, if elected, he would deal harshly with blacks. His "Southern Strategy" was a gesture to white voters in the Old Confederacy that he did not intend to enforce civil rights laws.

Nixon defeated life-long civil rights advocate Hubert Humphrey who, as Johnson's vice president, had the disadvantage of being perceived as acquiescing in the unpopular expansion of the Vietnam War. Although Nixon began his presidency with an attitude of "benign neglect" toward blacks and rarely met with black leaders, his administration was not entirely negative toward black interests. He created the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (now the Minority Business Development Administration) as a part of his "black capitalism" policy. Furthermore, regulations establishing national policy on affirmative action were adopted during his administration. Nevertheless, Nixon's term in office marked a turning point away from the era of a racially progressive presidency.

This decline became even more apparent when contrasted with President Jimmy Carter's single term in office. Carter opened the White House to black leaders, provided funding for social programs established by Johnson, and appointed more than 40 blacks to federal judgeships. However, Carter's policy of opening the government to blacks faded with his unsuccessful bid for re-election.

The presidency of Ronald Reagan was unequivocally hostile to blacks. Part of his strategy in the 1980 election was to bring into the Republican political tent segments of the electorate that were opposed to civil rights and the social programs that had benefitted blacks and other minorities during the 1960s and '70s. Scapegoating blacks as one of the sources of the nation's problems, Reagan wrapped anti-black messages in code words. He reached out to white voters who were tired of "quotas" and "racial preferences" and conjured up images of "welfare queens" ripping off government programs to engage in expensive life styles.

As the GOP kept faith with its new conservative constituency, relations between African-Americans and the White House sunk to their lowest point in over 60 years. Reagan cut funding for social and economic development programs that benefitted the poor, blacks, and other minorities. He took an uncompromising attitude in his opposition to strong civil rights enforcement and attempted to decimate anti-discrimination laws.

Reagan's successor, George Bush, was long perceived to be a moderate in his views on race. But Bush sent a dual message to the country. His "Willie Horton" TV ads during the 1988 campaign reassured the Reagan coalition but left black Americans with a sense of foreboding. Despite this, however, his inaugural pledge to preside over a "kinder and gentler" administration brought hope to many African-Americans. Optimism was buttressed when Bush declared at the Joint Center's 1990 annual dinner that he accepted the challenge of having his administration live up to the "highest ideals of the civil rights movement." Yet his actions as president have been essentially to continue Reagan's policies on race as illustrated by his veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1990, calling it a "quota bill." (Some political observers believed he signed the measure in 1991 partly to avoid appearing to be philosophically aligned with former Klan leader David Duke, then campaigning as a Republican to be governor of Louisiana.)

It remains to be seen whether Bush will alter his policies in light of the Rodney King affair and provide the leadership needed to promote racial and ethnic accord in our multicultural democracy. ■

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue:

- The FBI settles claims of discrimination with black agents.
- Charging that the GOP relegates minorities to token status, a black Republican group may spur the party to change through a successful lawsuit.
- Redistricting Update: North Carolina and Louisiana.
- Across the Nation: Congressman Lucien Blackwell holds on in Philadelphia, his colleague Mervyn Dymally of California retires; two black female political figures vie for an L.A. board of supervisors seat; and the son of L. Douglas Wilder is elected to the Virginia House of Delegates.

FBI Settles With Black Agents

In April, after admitting to a pattern of racially disparate employment practices, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agreed to offer compensatory promotions, new assignments, and bonuses to several black agents. Lawyers for the agents called the deal "a fair resolution of vigorously disputed claims." While the agreement does not state that the FBI knowingly allowed racially biased practices to exist, it does acknowledge the existence of unfair policies and practices which may have led to disparities between the treatment of black and white agents. Of the 10,443 agents in the FBI today, 4.9 percent (512) are black; 5.8 percent (609) Hispanic; 1.5 percent (153) Asian; and 0.4 percent (42) Native American.

Last year more than 300 black special agents banded together as a group calling itself BADGE (Black Agents Don't Get Equality) and claimed that agents of their race were often overlooked when it came to upgraded assignments, pay increases, and training for supervisory positions. (See the July 1991 issue of FOCUS, "FBI Chief Discusses Racism, Drug War.") Some asserted that they were often reprimanded when they complained and then purposely passed over for future promotions. The black agents decided to retain attorneys to determine if the FBI had violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits employment discrimination.

BADGE was represented by three legal teams: Arnold & Porter, a Washington-based law firm; the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; and Kinoy, Taren, Geraghty & Potter, based in Chicago. In an effort to avoid a nasty court battle like the one the Bureau underwent in 1989 when a group of Hispanic agents in Texas filed and won a discrimination lawsuit, FBI Director **WILLIAM S. SESSIONS** ordered internal investigations into BADGE's allegations. After an examination of personnel data and statistical information by both the Bureau's and BADGE's attorneys, the FBI acknowledged the discrepancies.

Several measures will be taken to improve the Bureau's practices. They include: the promotion (with back pay) of six black agents to supervisory positions; the elevation of more black agents into the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams, which are responsible for conducting high-risk missions; restitution for some black agents of passed-over bonuses and awards; and the hiring of outside consultants to assist the Bureau in developing more equitable disciplinary procedures, supervisory training, and career development programs. Remarking on the agreement, Sessions said, "The changes to policy and procedures that have been agreed to will make the FBI a stronger and more cohesive organization and one that is perceived as fairer to all of its employees." FBI officials do not foresee the agreement causing friction between black and white agents. Rather, they view it as beneficial to all personnel.

DAVID SHAFFER, an attorney at Arnold & Porter, says the FBI's measures should be seen as a form of redress for a pattern of past inequitable practices and that these changes should insure fair treatment of black agents

in the future. **JOSEPH SELLERS** agrees. A lawyer with the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Sellers says, "No change in rules can change human behavior immediately. Those who want to discriminate will. We hope the agreement will make it harder to do so and make those who do discriminate readily accountable for any clandestine actions they take."

Black Republicans Claiming GOP Discrimination Win Lawsuit

In an apparent victory for the Freedom Republicans, the black GOP group, a U.S. district court judge ruled on April 7 that the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) must adopt civil rights enforcement regulations that apply to minority participation in political parties. At issue is a lawsuit filed by the group against the FEC because it has refused to invoke Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to compel the Republican Party to include more blacks as presidential convention delegates and as members of its national committee.

The ruling by judge **CHARLES R. RICHEY** means that once the Commission formulates anti-bias rules it can withhold federal funds from a political party proven to discriminate in delegate selection. The decision signaled a ray of hope for the predominantly black New York City-based Freedom Republicans, who claims the Republican National Committee's (RNC) rules governing delegate apportionment and RNC membership lock out minorities.

The Freedom Republicans charge that the RNC relegates the party's racial and ethnic auxiliary groups to "ornamental quotas" with no real power. Currently only three (all from the U.S. Virgin Islands) of the 165 RNC members are black. (See January TrendLetter). At the 1988 Republican convention, black delegates were just three percent of the 2,277 total. This minimal black participation led the Freedom Republicans to lodge a formal complaint with the Commission in December. The FEC dismissed the complaint, claiming it lacked jurisdiction and that Title VI does not apply to the funding of political conventions because it would violate the First Amendment protection of freedom of assembly. So in January the Freedom Republicans filed their suit. Finding in favor of the group, Judge Richey's decision asserts that the legislative history of the Federal Election Campaign Act Amendments of 1974 does not suggest a congressional desire to prevent the FEC from enforcing Title VI provisions. The ruling goes on to cite numerous court precedents in which the interests of free speech and freedom of association have been overridden by the need to prevent state-sponsored discrimination.

Since the GOP receives money from the Commission for its presidential convention, the Freedom Republicans hope the possibility of financial loss will encourage the party to implement rules more conducive to the selection of black delegates and RNC members. **LUGENIA GORDON**, president of the Freedom Republicans, was pleased with the ruling but noted that the group's dispute with the GOP is not over. She says the group is consulting with its Washington, D.C., attorney **FRED KELLOGG** regarding what the next step will be in its efforts to gain greater access for minorities in the party. "I'm fighting for a principle; a true two-party system in this country. Black people will be free only when both parties are running after us for our vote," says Gordon.

In the lawsuit, the plaintiffs also requested suspension of funds from the GOP's convention in Houston on August 17 to 20, but that request was not granted. According to the FEC, both parties received $11,048,000 this year for their conventions, based on a formula dictated in the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act of 1971. **KYLE SIMMONS** of the RNC's convention office in Houston, said a rough estimate of the cost of this year's convention would be more than $20 million dollars. Despite Richey's favorable ruling, black involvement in this year's Republican Convention is not likely to increase much above that of four years ago. For although the judge's decision recommended urgent action on the part of the FEC, a definite timetable for adopting Title VI rules was not stipulated. The rule-making process involves several steps and will not be completed before the RNC's convention. Furthermore, a Commission spokesperson says the FEC may appeal the decision.

Redistricting Update: North Carolina and Louisiana

This year, the Congressional Black Caucus will expand its membership by as much as 50 percent due mainly to the redistricting process. Several new congressional districts with majority-black populations have been created, mostly in Southern states, which will enable voters in several Southern communities to elect African-Americans to Congress for the first time since Reconstruction.

Two black candidates from newly formed districts in North Carolina recently moved closer to winning seats in Congress. On May 5 black Warren County Commissioner **EVA CLAYTON** won a place in the June 2 runoff for the Democratic nomination to represent the newly created, mostly rural 1st district in the Fayetteville and Wilmington area. She will go head-to-head with white state representative **WALTER B. JONES, JR.**, the son of the retiring incumbent **WALTER B. JONES, SR.** (See April Across the Nation) Jones almost walked away with the nomination by winning 38 percent of the vote to Clayton's 31 percent among a field of seven candidates. In North Carolina, a candidate only needs a plurality of 40 percent to win. Local politicos say second primaries have not worked in black candidates' favor mainly due to low voter turnout. But poll results from the May 5 primary indicate that black turnout has increased. If Clayton wins the runoff, she will take on white Republican **TED TYLER** in November.

In the race for the state's other majority-black congressional district—the 12th, including parts of the state's major cities in the Piedmont region—Charlotte attorney and former state senator **MELVIN WATT** soundly defeated Durham state representative **HENRY M. "MICKEY" MICHAUX** (47 to 27 percent respectively) to win the Democratic nomination. Both of them are black. The Republican nomination will be decided in the June 2 runoff between two black candidates, attorney and Guilford county (Greensboro) clerk of the court **BARBARA GORE WASHINGTON** and state assistant secretary of human resources **GEORGE JONES, SR.**, of Raleigh. Washington received 33 percent of the vote in the primary to Jones' 21 percent. The state has not been represented in Congress by a black person since 1901.

In Louisiana, the state house on May 7 passed its redistricting bill, which would create a new 7th congressional district with a black voting-age population of 63 percent. The 7th would include parts of Shreveport, Monroe, Alexandria, and East Baton Rouge. The state senate is considering its own redistricting proposal. The final redistricting plan will require the approval of the U.S. Justice Department or a federal court as mandated by the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Newly Created Majority Black Congressional Districts[a]

State	District Number	Major Cities	%Black Voting Age Population
Alabama	#7	Birmingham, Montgomery	64
Georgia	#2	Columbus, Macon	53
	#11	Augusta, Savannah	60
Maryland	#4	(suburbs of Washington, D.C.)	59[b]
North Carolina	#1	Wilmington	53
	#12	Durham, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Charlotte	53
South Carolina	#6	Charleston, Columbia, Florence	58
Texas	#30	Dallas	46[c]
Virginia	#3	Richmond, Norfolk	61

[a] As of May 11, 1992
[b] Percent of the *total* population that is black
[c] 15 percent of the voting age population is Hispanic

Source: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Across the Nation

CALIFORNIA: After serving six terms, Compton's Democratic Congressman **MERVYN DYMALLY**, 65, will retire this year, ending a political career that spans 30 years. Prior to his election to Congress in 1980, he served as a state representative, the state's first black state senator, lieutenant governor, and was also a member of the Joint Center's board of governors. Dymally has endorsed his 33-year-old daughter LYNN, a candidate who currently serves as a Compton school board member. An attorney and owner of a management and consulting firm, the younger Dymally has served eight years on the school board.

In the June 2 primary she will battle four other contenders for the Democratic nomination, including Compton's black mayor, **WALTER R. TUCKER, JR.**, who is completing the unexpired term of his namesake father who died in office last year. Also in the race are Carson city council member VERA R. DeWITT, a Hispanic; **LAWRENCE A. GRISBY**, a black Los Angeles attorney; and Hispanic businessman **JOE MENDEZ, JR**. There are no Republican contenders for the newly redistricted 37th district seat which includes the southern Los Angeles County communities of Compton, Carson, Watts, and Long Beach, parts of which were devastated by the civil disturbances that followed the **RODNEY KING** verdict. According to **BASIL KIMBREW**, a black Los Angeles political consultant, the key issue in this campaign is "how to rebuild the area." Both Dymally and Tucker are demanding, among other things, minority business development in their communities and state and federal assistance for economic revitalization.

In Los Angeles, two political heavyweights—former Congresswoman **YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE** and Democratic state senator **DIANE WATSON**—are vying for the 2nd supervisorial district seat on the powerful five-member county board of supervisors. Burke and Watson are considered to be leading the field of 12 candidates in the June 2 primary. The district has more than 1.5 million citizens, most of whom are black or Hispanic. This is a high-stakes contest; the board of supervisors represents more than 7 million people, has legislative, executive, and judicial authority, and oversees a budget of more than $8 billion.

A former three-term assemblywoman and vice chair of the 1972 Democratic National Convention, Burke was elected to Congress in 1972—the first black woman ever elected to the House from California. She served six years in Washington and decided not to seek a fourth term, choosing instead to make an unsuccessful bid for state attorney general in 1978. In 1979 then-Governor **EDMUND "JERRY" BROWN, JR.** appointed her to fill a vacancy on the board of supervisors. Representing the largely white Malibu and Long Beach areas, she served one year, and lost election to a full term the following year. Burke has been endorsed by the district's supervisor of 40 years, **KENNETH HAHN**.

In 1979 Watson became the first black woman elected to the state senate. Currently serving her fourth term, Watson chairs the Health and Human Services Committee and serves on several other committees, including budget and judiciary. Prior to her senate career she was an educator—teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, college instructor—and served four years on the board of the Los Angeles school district. Most of the residents in her senatorial district, the 28th, also reside in the second supervisorial district where Watson enjoys considerable visibility and name recognition.

In San Francisco, board of supervisors president **DORIS WARD** was appointed by Mayor **FRANK JORDAN** as tax assessor for the city and county in March. A Democrat, Ward is the first black and the first woman to hold the position. A 12-year veteran of the board and the first black to serve as president, Ward replaces **RICHARD HONGISTO** who was appointed police chief. Ward supervises a staff of more than 100 and is in charge of raising about 35 percent of the city's revenues. Her agency prepares the tax rules that apply to businesses, personal property, and real estate.

PENNSYLVANIA: In the April 28 primary, Philadelphia congressman **LUCIEN BLACKWELL** turned back an aggressive challenge from **C. DELORES TUCKER** for the Democratic nomination for his 2nd district seat. Tucker chairs the Democratic National Committee's black caucus and was a previous secretary of state. A former state representative, city council member, and union leader, Blackwell claimed 54 percent of the vote, out-polling Tucker by 13 percentage points. Blackwell will face Republican **LARRY HOLLIN** in the November general election. Blackwell is all but certain to win in this majority-black and overwhelmingly Democratic district.

VIRGINIA: Like father like son. And so it is for **LAWRENCE D. "LARRY" WILDER**, son of the state's first black governor **L. DOUGLAS WILDER**. The younger Wilder won a seat in the state house of delegates in a May 5 special election. Capturing 46 percent of the vote, Wilder defeated three opponents for the seat representing the 70th district in Richmond: black Republican **LYNDA G. OWENS**, white independent **CECIL H. CREASEY, JR.** and black write-in contender **EARNESTINE CLARK**. The 30-year-old attorney will complete the unexpired term of black Democrat **ROLAND EALEY**, a five-term member who died in March. A graduate of the University of Virginia Law School, Wilder is a partner in the Richmond law firm of Wilder and Gregory.

Prisoners of the Drug War

Are Boot Camps Being Used to Rehabilitate Young Offenders Or Are They Just Traditional Prisons With Marching Drills?

by Katherine McFate and Cheryl Reed

In recent years, as the nation's jails and prisons overflow with drug offenders of ever younger ages, many public officials have begun to search for alternatives to lengthy prison sentences. Military-style "boot camps" for young offenders have become a politically attractive innovation. Over half the states in the country have established such "shock incarceration" programs. Do these programs reduce recidivism among young offenders or are they largely ineffective efforts to show the public that politicians are "tough on criminals"?

With that question in mind, this article looks at the causes of the prison overcrowding that has been the impetus for boot camp programs, describes several kinds of programs currently in operation, and discusses the shortcomings and the potential of these programs as an alternative to "hard time."

The Drug War and Black Males

The prisoners of America's "War on Drugs" are disproportionately minority males. In 1980, 25 percent of drug arrestees were black; by 1990, over 40 percent were black. In 1983, one in 15 inmates in state prisons was a drug offender; by 1988, the figure was one in five. And mandatory sentencing guidelines have nearly tripled the average time a drug offender spends in prison—from 2.2 years in 1985 to 6.5 years today. In short, although the current administration's National Drug Control Policy emphasis on supply reduction and law enforcement has not significantly reduced the availability of drugs, it has overburdened the criminal justice system at all levels.

The growth in drug arrest rates among black youth reflects both a growing involvement in the drug trade due partly to declining opportunities in the legal economy, and the prevalence of black youth in street-level dealing, an "occupational niche" that makes them easy targets for arrests. Police are much more likely to arrest and incarcerate individuals at the lowest level of drug distribution operations—there are more of them to find, they are highly visible. Moreover, although whites, Hispanics, and Asians are also involved in the drug trade, police often target low-income black areas for anti-drug sweeps, which puts black youth at greater risk of arrest and incarceration than youth of other races.

Growing involvement in serious drug abuse may be another reason young minority males are increasingly likely to find themselves in prison on drug charges. The National Institute of Drug Abuse Household Survey shows that black males between the ages of 18 and 25 reported the highest rate of regular cocaine use of any age-race-gender group. An estimated one of every twenty 18-to-25-year-old black males in the U.S. reported using cocaine monthly in 1990. More than half the black males who appear in emergency room incidents—as reported by hospitals participating in the Drug Abuse Warning Network—describe the motive for their drug use as addiction. Drug addiction often traps abusers in a cycle of dealing-to-support-drug-use, placing them at great risk of criminal prosecution.

Quantitative evidence shows that arrest and incarceration have a devastating impact on young African-American males. Harvard economist Richard Freeman has found that prison severely reduces a young black man's chances of finding legitimate employment and reduces his long-term earnings potential. In the U.S. today, one of every four black males between the ages of 18 and 29 is under criminal court supervision (awaiting trial, on probation or parole, or incarcerated).

Boot Camps as an Alternative to Prisons

As drug enforcement efforts intensified in the mid-1980s and mandatory sentences increased average prison terms for drug offenders, prison overcrowding became a major problem. The federal prisons are operating at 159 percent of their stated capacity. Between 1985 and 1988, federal corrections expenditures increased by 61 percent. Primarily because of costs and overcrowding problems, criminal justice officials have begun to experiment with alternatives to traditional prisons. Currently, 26 states operate "shock incarceration" or "boot camp" programs. In addition, a number of counties also run their own programs. Two states, Texas and New York, are developing special boot camps for adult drug offenders.

Shock incarceration programs typically include physical drills, rigorous exercise, and work, and it is usually reserved for nonviolent, first-time offenders or young people. Based on the kind of training used in the military, the rationale is that an intensive course of strict discipline may "shock" these offenders into law-abiding behavior. Some programs are used as an alternative to serving any time in prison: an individual volunteers or is sentenced to a

(Continued on next page)

Ms. McFate is a senior research associate and Ms. Reed is a research assistant at the Joint Center.

Prisoners

(Continued from page 5)

boot camp (usually for a three- to six-month course) and then spends time under community supervision. This alternative may curb contact with criminal networks and, since employment is typically a condition of probation, can push the offender back into the legitimate labor market quickly. Both effects would help to reduce recidivism.

However, in most states, participation in boot camps does not replace prison time, it only reduces the length of the individual's prison term. In other words, the offender spends the first part of his sentence in regular prison and is released to early parole upon completion of the boot camp program. These kinds of programs can help reduce prison overcrowding—and save taxpayers' dollars—by churning inmates out of the system more rapidly, but it is unclear that they can accomplish much more.

The most comprehensive and effective boot camp programs provide personal counselling, educational opportunities, and skills training as well as physical discipline regimens. The "About Face Program", established in New Orleans in 1987 to reduce sentences, is a good example of a more reconstructive approach. About Face serves 100 inmates at a time who are between 17 and 40 years old and have been charged with nonviolent offenses. Participants are selected from among prisoners who have applied for acceptance in the program and who meet certain critieria. The program offers one-on-one counselling, substance abuse programs, community service, educational courses, vocational training, and life skills training. Special attention is also given to preparing inmates for release. Each participant is required to make family and employment contacts upon release to ensure a return to a stable environment. Upon completion of the six-month program, graduates are considered for immediate parole. To date, no graduate has had his parole denied. A preliminary evaluation shows that only 9 percent of a group of adult About Face graduates have returned to prison in the three years after graduating. Given that the average three-year recidivism rate in the nation is over 60 percent, this figure is extraordinary. It is even more impressive given that 85 to 90 percent of About Face participants had a history of substance abuse. However, these findings must be qualified by the fact that only a select group of inmates is accepted into the program and only about one-third of those accepted actually completes the course.

Boot Camps for Juveniles?

As the average age of young drug offenders decreases, juvenile detention centers are also becoming overcrowded. Since black juveniles are the fastest growing group among inmates of penal institutions, they are most likely to be affected by the problem of overcrowding. Between 1985 and 1986, the number of juvenile cases handled by the courts increased by only one percent; however, the number of juveniles sentenced to detention centers as a result of drug charges during that period increased by 21 percent. In that one year alone, the number of nonwhite youths referred to reformatories by juvenile courts increased by 42 percent. This increase in referrals coupled with the court's greater likelihood of detaining drug offenders resulted in a 71 percent rise in the number of nonwhite youths detained for a drug offense, according to a March 1990 report from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Overcrowding affects the ability of juvenile facilities to provide the rehabilitative services most are meant to supply. The annual cost of incarcerating a juvenile can be as high as $40,000 per inmate compared to an average of $25,000 for adults, because juvenile detention centers are required to provide educational, vocational, and counselling services. However, with overcrowding and staff shortages, many juvenile detention centers have become nothing more than human warehouses. Boot camps are now being suggested as a mechanism for providing more comprehensive services to juvenile inmates.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department Drug Treatment Boot Camp program has been heralded as a promising new intervention model. Established in September 1990 specifically for juvenile drug offenders, this L.A. boot camp is the first program of its kind in the United States. A residential program, it targets male drug offenders who have a documented history of substance abuse and are between the ages of 16 and 18. The program lasts an average of five months.

The L.A. program's paramilitary setting provides structured discipline but is based on a rehabilitative philosophy. Similar to About Face, it offers individual counselling, drug education and treatment, job training, and work interspersed with a program of drills, marching, and physical training. Furthermore, through the program, the L.A. County Office of Education provides certified and accredited high school courses. Participants are in school every other weekday and work on alternate weekdays under paid-contract work assignments.

The County Department of Public Works, the Department of Water and Power, and the Rapid Transit Department pay $450 a day per work crew, and each participant earns $10 per day toward court-ordered restitution to victims of crime. A nonprofit contract agency called the Inter-agency Drug Abuse Recovery Program provides chemical-dependency treatment services for the juveniles and training programs for the staff. The program serves a maximum of 210 youngsters at a time.

When a youth completes the L.A. program, he is released to six months of intensive supervision. Six deputy probation officers are assigned to work exclusively with these juveniles, and each is assigned a relatively small case load of 35 to 50 clients. The officers provide personal counselling, and they coordinate services from other community-based organizations. They focus on education, vocational guidance and employment.

Since its inception, 883 juveniles have been admitted to

(Continued on back page)

High Risk Homes and Educational Failure

Poverty and Single Parent Homes Are Among the Risk Factors That Contribute to the Poor Educational Performance of Many Children

by John Wilson, Jr.

As the nation attempts to grapple with one of its most serious crises—educating its young—we are learning that many of the impediments to educational success among African-American children are risk factors that originate in their home environments. The five most serious risk factors are single parent households, poverty, low educational attainment of the parents, siblings who have dropped out of school, and the amount of time a child spends alone each day.

These risk factors begin to affect children as early as the primary grades. Children who tend to succeed in school usually start first grade with the social skills necessary to interact with their teachers and fellow students, have memorized the alphabet, and have been exposed to their age-appropriate literature. These skills and experiences are most often imparted by a knowing adult who provides the educational foundation upon which more sophisticated skills may be built. Unfortunately, single working mothers are often forced to devote more time to the financial support of their families at the expense of the educational development of their children.

Table 1 shows that by the time black 13-year-olds reach eighth grade, the proportions falling behind grade level increase dramatically for their age group. When children fall increasingly further behind in grade level, their risk of dropping out of school increases. And black dropouts with few skills are more likely to be unemployed, underemployed, and low wage earners as adults. ■

Table 1. Percent of 13-year-old Black Males and Females 1 or More Years Below Grade Level, 1969-1989

Year	Males (in percentages)	Females
1969	37.7	33.5
1970	46.7	29.3
1971	43.7	24.5
1972	35.6	26.8
1973	49.0	23.1
1974	45.9	30.1
1975	29.9	28.9
1976	30.1	15.9
1977	28.5	27.2
1978	33.4	25.8
1979	37.6	25.8
1980	37.5	22.4
1981	36.7	32.3
1982	41.9	33.3
1983	52.5	26.0
1984	44.4	32.0
1985	44.1	40.0
1986	44.0	33.1
1987	43.2	33.2
1988	41.7	35.3
1989	51.5	38.0

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Table 2. Percentage of Eigth Graders with Various Risk Factors, by Race/Ethnicity, 1988

Race/ Ethnicity	Parent is Single	Parents have no high school diploma	Income Less than $15,000	Sibling has dropped out of school	Home alone more than three hours daily
Total	22.3	10.5	21.3	10.0	13.6
White	17.7	6.2	14.1	8.8	12.0
Black	46.5	15.8	47.0	13.0	19.5
Hispanic[1]	23.4	33.4	37.5	16.0	16.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	14.2	8.8	17.8	6.1	15.9
American Indian	31.1	13.4	40.1	15.1	18.6

[1] Hispanics may be of any race.
Source: U.S. Department of Education

Dr. Wilson is a senior research associate at the Joint Center and is heading research on the crisis of black male youth.

Prisoners

(Continued from page 6)

the L.A. boot camp; 500 have completed the camp and been released to aftercare; 189 are currently enrolled. Only 16 percent of those who entered the program have dropped out. With all operating expenditures included, the average daily costs per participant was $73 in fiscal year 1991. By contrast, the county's traditional juvenile detention hall ran to about $80 per person per day. This shows intensive rehabilitative courses are not necessarily more expensive than traditional approaches. While no official recidivism rates are yet available, preliminary data indicate that the rates among boot camp graduates will be significantly lower than the rates of juveniles in L.A.'s traditional institutions.

Unfortunately, local and state budget shortfalls in California for fiscal year 1993 may force the county to close this boot camp and 18 other boot camps in Los Angeles County. Although the County Board of Supervisors has written to both the governor and the state legislature requesting assistance, financing for the programs will depend on the budget package that the state will negotiate in the next few months. If these promising new alternatives are shut down, more Los Angeles County juvenile offenders will be forced into state-run, overcrowded institutions that are not equipped to offer the special rehabilitative services of these smaller programs.

It is likely that more young, minority drug offenders will be referred to boot camp programs. If the goal of these programs is simply to expose young males to some kind of short-term disciplinary training and to reduce overcrowding in high-security penal institutions, then boot camp advocates can claim success. If, however, the goal of these alternatives is to divert young men from lives of crime and to have a lasting effect on their recidivism rates, then the claims of success must be qualified. Only certain kinds of programs—those that provide remedial education, counselling, job training, post-release supervision—appear to be effective in reducing recidivism. Unfortunately, these "full-service" boot camps are still the exception, not the rule.

Nonetheless, the apparent success of providing comprehensive services to incarcerated youthful offenders raises serious questions about this society's approach to the drug problem and urban policy in general. If comprehensive boot camps can reduce recidivism and hence, the long-term overall costs associated with incarceration, why are they not in wider use? Why aren't these kinds of programs universally available options for judges when sentencing young adults? Even more to the point, if remedial education, job training, and counselling reduce recidivism, then isn't it reasonable to expect that participation in such programs could reduce initial incarceration rates? Why do young black men need to be imprisoned before we recognize the moral and financial imperative of providing them with the skills and training to enable them to participate in the larger economy? ■

JOINT CENTER FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STUDIES

Moving July 10th!

Our new address:

1090 Vermont Ave., N.W.
Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20005-4961

FOCUS *is printed on recycled paper.*

FOCUS
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
1301 Pa. Ave., N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 626-3500

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Postmaster: Form 3547 requested

NOTICE TO READERS: Please notify FOCUS of any change of address or title. YOU MUST ATTACH THE MAILING LABEL FROM THE BACK COVER when writing about service or change of address. No change can be made without this information. Allow 6 weeks for change of address to take effect. Thank you.

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 6958
Washington, D.C.