

The failure of American racial integration

Like millions of my fellow citizens, I thought we as a nation had made great strides in leveling the playing field for America's African-American population since the landmark civil rights legislation of the late sixties. Blacks had moved rapidly up the income ladder. They had easier access to quality education. They got better-paying jobs with more responsibility and authority and improved prospects for career advancement. They were elected to local, state and federal offices and even one of their *own*, a half-Black Senator, Barack Hussein Obama became President for eight years.

That's not bad when you consider the state of the Black to White disparity that still existed in 1968 when the second of two major civil rights laws was passed. Things seemed to be improving apart from some very upsetting events like the scourge of illicit drug use in the Black communities, deadly gang confrontations that led to drive-by shootings, snuffing out the lives of hundreds of innocents. And then there was the beating of Rodney King and the ensuing racial flare-ups. We managed to extinguish the flames and return to 'normal,' keeping the opportunities coming and holding the doors open to Blacks at our universities and even providing employment for graduates from those universities. This was the perception, anyway. Then, on February 26th of 2012, a young unarmed 17-year old Black youth was walking home and was killed by a man after he got into a fight with him and was shot to death.

The nation was shocked and the media played up the fact that the other man was a 'White Hispanic' and the sub-rosa race conflict had re-surfaced. Even the American President weighed in on the matter and said that if he had had a son, he would have looked like the victim. This was not the first high-profile mixed-race criminal occurrence. Seven years earlier, football star O.J. Simpson was acquitted of killing his Caucasian wife after a long much-publicized trial. Both cases served to remind us that crimes against, or of, or by the races were happening all around us. Incarceration rates of young Black men were skyrocketing as more of them (a larger number than Whites) were being convicted of crack cocaine use which indicated there was an imbalance or built-in prejudice in the justice system. Fortunately, this was later corrected.

The Black population in major cities was also under attack by Black gangs and OTG (other than gang) criminals. Law and order was breaking down in the inner cities of America and Blacks were both victims and perpetrators in alarmingly high numbers. The gains that many Blacks had made since the sixties were overshadowed by their losses, and in America we were hesitant about talking about the problem for fear of sounding 'racist'. Statements by Eric Holder, the first Black U.S. Attorney General made shortly after he took office in 2009 raised the issue of racial inequality above the water line. In a speech on Black History Month at the Justice Department, he told an overflow crowd that the nation remains "voluntarily socially segregated."

He went on, "Though this nation has proudly thought of itself as an ethnic melting pot, in things racial we have always been and continue to be, in too many ways, essentially a nation of cowards." Holder was right but he was also wrong. Americans and their elected leaders, along with corporate and university presidents and CEOs had been talking about race for decades. The truthful part of his remarks lay under the surface; ordinary Americans hadn't been having those conversations about race. They were voluntarily segregating, socially. Blacks spent most of their time in their communities with their people and Whites did the same with theirs. Yes, there were mixed neighborhoods in suburbia, but not in many inner cities which, if viewed superficially, might lead one to believe that there was a conspiracy afoot to keep the races separated.

The melting pot worked pretty well for new 'Whiter' immigrants, but when many of those immigrants became better off, financially, they moved to the suburbs or more 'White' parts of the cities. That's a condition we've been dealing with for generations, and just having a half-Black President, a Black Attorney General and a Black National Security Advisor wasn't going to change that any time soon.

It takes years and sometimes generations for social and cultural attitudes to change and mature, but many in the Black community were getting impatient and were tired of waiting for human nature and coexistence in the workplace to change things for their people. Compounding that impatience was the perception that the White power structure had a vested interest in keeping the Black man down and that that power was given to White officers in America's police forces to 'deal with the problem.' Add to that the agitations of a few vocal *race hustlers* who saw racial unrest as a way to burnish their reputations (and line their pockets by shaking-down American corporations) and the country was getting jittery, especially in the inner cities during the second term of the Obama Administration.

Demonstrations by Black and some White youth increased, and it became clear that the Civil Rights Movement had entered a new more militant phase. It had also attracted a new brand of activist, the Leftist protagonist that saw the American system as hopelessly corrupt, controlled by a White power elite and Wall Street oligarchs. They were backed up by the media and especially by the social media that were pleased that these anti-establishment types were using their digital platforms to spread their message and organize their protests. (The more eyeballs on their platforms, the more money they raked in.) The 'tribes' of the disenfranchised or disgruntled had merged which, ironically, was a new form of integration that hadn't been seen since the sixties and especially the anti-Vietnam protests of the seventies! This integrated movement was, however, almost totally comprised of under-thirties activists and not their parents.

This was a tempting demographic for Progressive politicians in the Democrat Party who saw harnessing this racial unrest as a way to win elections. Many political watchers believed that if the Left could channel the anger of the Black (and to a lesser degree Latino) voter blocks and direct their anger against Conservative candidates for public office, they (the Democrats) would be victorious. That may sound cynical, but it is not necessarily untrue. Republicans understood, albeit at a late stage, how organized and purposeful the new Black equality movement was. They also knew they had to do something, anything, to keep the Left from capitalizing on the energy of groups like BLM.

Unfortunately, BLM and Antifa and others had already decided on a strategy of undermining the rule of law by mobilizing and occupying America's streets, destroying Americans' property and creating chaos in cities they felt were the 'low hanging fruit' - the easy targets - where there were Left-leaning, local governments, universities with ideologically-driven students and young unemployed people of both Black and White races. Seattle, Portland, L.A., Chicago, St. Louis, Washington, D.C. were all on the radicals' radar. Using their demands of achieving racial and social justice as their justification for violence they were able to convince the media and many in the activist Black community to support them.

The Trump years were spent trying to oppose this movement that had now ratcheted up the violence. Unraveling the racial ball of twine was not going to be easy, but the Administration decided to start by improving economic opportunities (jobs) for Blacks and then by creating opportunity zones for inner city investment. The idea was to defuse and replace poverty and the accompanying anger with something positive...work and a paycheck. The thought being that once things calmed down Whites and Blacks could take up the dialogue anew on real racial problems. Unfortunately, the Administration and ordinary Americans had underestimated how widespread and deep the movement's roots went. It had become gentrified and had raked in millions from corporate America that was afraid of losing their retail outlets to looting and arson. They feared boycotts and charges of racism and attacks on their stock prices, so they anteed up. BLM became rich and the race war entered a new phase with more pressure being placed on Congress to DO something about the now-growing perception that America was inherently and systemically racist.

Newly-elected activist Congressional Representatives joined up with the 'lions' of the old Congress - so-called icons of the civil rights movement of the sixties - and other Congressional colleagues who had sponsored failed 'racial equity' bills in order to form a strong Progressive alliance that would

take up the fight against 'White privilege' and help break up the status quo power structure AND elect a Progressive President. With the media, the legislators, corporate America, the universities and the young and restless activists on their side, the next shoe the movement would drop would land with a thud. That 'shoe' was a wholesale push for repudiation of sixty-plus years of integration attempts to bring the races together. Instead of pursuing the same old course of integrating all Americans of every race and background, the movement decided to part company with the traditionalist race leaders and organizations and embark on a *segregation for the nation* crusade that would give an imprimatur to their demands to remain apart and supra-equal, and here I believe is their reasoning...

The only way to alter the current outcomes for Blacks is to change the present, 'we are all equal' equation. A change in legislation will be required to tilt the balance in their favor by approving a preference for their racial goals over those of other races. This is something that cannot be accomplished under our existing laws.

If America's Blacks were to achieve 'special status' as an historically disadvantaged group with legitimate claims for reparations, special treatment in the workplace, in colleges and everywhere else, this form of national government-approved segregation would effectively upend over a century-plus of integration efforts and would become America's new, officially-condoned and mandated form of racism. Worse, it would, ironically, prove the allegation that America is systemically racist!

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