

IF I WERE A LEADER OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

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Abstract

If I were a leader of the black community, I would preach a sermon of market fundamentalism. I would say to my flock, with Malcolm X, that you have been fooled, you have been bamboozled, you have been misled, you have been baffled, you have been tricked into thinking that socialism and government largesse would be the way toward prosperity and economic wellbeing. The very opposite is the case. The salvation of our community lies in the direction of libertarianism, free enterprise and capitalism. Specifically, and of top importance, we must keep the younger members of our community out of jail, where all too many of them are now languishing. To that end, we must call for a legalization of drugs, all of them without exception, an end to welfare and the repeal of the minimum wage law. We must bring the black father back into the household and overcome his banishment by the welfare system. We must not engage in Balkanization. We must not fear to “act white.”

Keywords: Drugs; Welfare; Bourgeois values; Crime; Acting white

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*Si yo fuera líder de la comunidad negra***Resumen**

Si yo fuera líder de la comunidad negra, predicaría un sermón de fundamentalismo de mercado. Les diría a mis feligreses, como Malcolm X, que han sido engañados, embaucados, confundidos, embaucados al creer que el socialismo y la generosidad del gobierno serían el camino hacia la prosperidad y el bienestar económico. La realidad es todo lo contrario. La salvación de nuestra comunidad reside en el libertarismo, la libre empresa y el capitalismo. Específicamente, y de suma importancia, debemos mantener a los jóvenes de nuestra comunidad fuera de la cárcel, donde demasiados de ellos languidecen actualmente. Para ello, debemos exigir la legalización de las drogas, todas sin excepción, el fin de la asistencia social y la derogación de la ley del salario mínimo. Debemos reintegrar al padre negro al hogar y superar su exclusión por parte del sistema de asistencia social. No debemos permitir la balcanización. No debemos temer «actuar como blancos».

Palabras clave: Drogas; Bienestar social; Valores burgueses; Delincuencia; Actuar como blancos

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1. Crime

All too many African Americans are now in jail. We comprise only some 13% of the overall population, and yet account for almost 50% of the inmates in prison. The actual figure is 38.6% (as of December 2, 2023) (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2023a). In other words, we are triply overrepresented. Matters are even worse when we focus on prisoners who are serving life sentences or life without parole. Then, the figure rises to 48%, or almost quadruple the rate of our proportion of the population (Prison Policy Initiative, 2026). The NAACP (2020) goes so far as to claim that there is a quintuple disproportionate incarceration rate. It would not surprise me if this were true. This is a crime¹ and a disgrace. This is a horror. This is just about the worst tragedy facing our community. That is why I mention this issue first and foremost.

What then, accounts for these horrid statistics? Do not sit there and tell me this has anything much to do with police racism. These numbers are too outrageously out of all proportion for this to explain more than a tiny bit of the disparity.

Sowell (2016) refutes this nonsense as follows:

“One of the most popular arguments used in many different contexts is to show that blacks have been disproportionately represented among people stopped by police, arrested or imprisoned...

“Although many people regard these ‘disparate impact’ statistics as evidence, or virtually proof, of racial discrimination, suppose that I should tell you that black basketball players are penalized by NBA referees out of all proportion to the 13 percent that blacks are in the American population.

”‘Wait a minute!’ you might respond. ‘Blacks are more than just 13 percent of the players in the NBA.’

“Black basketball players are several times more numerous than 13 percent of all NBA players. This is especially so among the star players, who are more likely to be on the floor, rather than sitting on the bench. And players on the floor most are the ones most likely to get penalized.

“The difference between the percentage of blacks in the general population and the percentage of blacks in the particular activity being discussed is the key to the fraudulent use of ‘disparate impact’ statistics in many other contexts.

“Hillary Clinton, for example, decried a ‘disgrace of a criminal-justice system that incarcerates so many more African-Americans proportionately than whites.’

“The most reliable crime statistics are statistics on murders, 52 percent of which were committed by blacks over the period from 1976 to 2005. If blacks are convicted of far more than 13 percent of all murders, does that mean that racism in the courts must be the reason?”

Instead, consider:

¹ In a very different sense

2. Drug prohibition

During the prohibition of alcohol, it was Italian Americans who played an important role in bringing these products to the market, thus satisfying customers. They paid for doing these good deeds with time in the pokey. Now, it would appear, it is the turn of my fellow African Americans to become mired in this trap. Almost half of all prisoners have been caught up in the tender mercies of the drug laws (the actual figure is 44.4% as of December 9, 2023) (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2023b). That means, if these pernicious laws which imprison adults for imbibing whatever substances they wish into their own bodies had never been enacted, almost half of my black brothers (very few sisters) would be free now. Let My People Go! Repeal these vicious laws!

Does this mean I favor the use of cocaine, heroin, and other addictive substances for anyone, black or white? Of course not. But there is all the world of difference between putting people in jail for a victimless crime, and favoring the use of these drugs.²

3. Welfare

This wicked system broke up the black family. It pretty much banished the black father from taking on his traditional role as head of the household. Nowadays, some three quarters of African-American children are being brought up without benefit of their dads nearby. Fathers are crucial for civilizing children, particularly boys. Mothers in single-headed families have difficulty in dealing with male teens. A significant element of black criminality, and subsequent incarceration, is due to the lack of adult males in the family and their supervision.

Yes, slavery broke up the black family, but only for its duration. It was like tossing the proverbial frog into boiling water. Its metabolism is such that it jumps right out. Welfare, in sharp contrast, is like tossing this creature into cold water and slowly heating it up. The frog succumbs. In the aftermath of slavery, husbands and wives got together. From 1870 to the mid-1930s, the number of children living in two parent families for whites and black was constant; the former was only slightly better than the latter in this regard. It seems difficult, then, to attribute this malady to the results of slavery, which ended in 1865. The black rate after the 1930s dipped below that for whites, and then even more sharply in 1965.³

Then what happened? How can we account for this subsequent severe drop? What happened was that Lyndon Baines Johnson's "Great Society" attacked our community. It made an unmarried pregnant girl and offer she "couldn't refuse." It stuffed more money and services down her throat, way more, than could be provided by the father of her child. It broke up the white family too, both here and in Sweden, but blacks were poorer than whites, and hence more vulnerable to this financial siren song. Welfare is insidious. It ought to be banned, forthwith. Read Charles Murray, yes, that Charles Murray (1984), on this matter in his book "Losing Ground" for more details.

² For the case in favor of drug legalization, see Anderson, 2002; Block, 1993, 1996, 2007A, 2007B, 2007C, 2016; Block, Wingfield and Whitehead, 2003; Calton, 2019; Cussen and Block, 2000; Friedman, 1992; Futerman and Block, 2021; Hanke and Walters, 2016; McMaken, 2016, 2017; Obioha and Block, 2012; Szasz, 1985, 1992; Thornton, 1991, 2020; Vance, 2012; Vuk, 2008; Whalin and Block, 2017; Wilson, 1999

³ See Stone, 2020, especially figure 2. See also Geary, 2015; Wilson, 2002

4. The minimum wage

This is an unemployment law. It does not lead to anyone being hired at a higher wage, at least not in equilibrium. It stipulates that no one can be employed unless his productivity is greater than the level mandated by this law. If someone's productivity is \$10 per hour, and the law requires that a wage of \$15 must be paid, this person is plain and simple unemployable. Period.⁴

Before the advent of this law in the late 1930s, the unemployment rate of whites and blacks was about the same. The joblessness rate for teens and adults, likewise, was similar. At present, the unemployment rate of blacks is double that of whites; the rate for teens is double that of adults. Hence, the number of black teenagers who cannot find an employer is quadruple that of adult whites who are so afflicted (U.S. Bureau of Labor, 2026). When a black teen cannot be employed, he is more vulnerable to a life of crime. I have said that the number one challenge facing our community is prison. Thus, I call for the total elimination of the minimum wage law.

Enough on crime. Are there no other difficulties in our community? Yes, there are.

5. Defund the police?

Please don't make me sick. The rate of black-on-black crime is astounding and horrendous (Epps, 2022). There are black policemen, along with others of all races, who give their very lives to stop this rampant racially internal criminality. What are you going to do the next time you need protection from marauders? Call upon a social worker? No, the men in blue are not perfect. They are human beings. But to call for their elimination or even diminution without any replacement (private police)⁵ is totally unconscionable and counterproductive (MacDonald 2010; 2017).

6. University

"Affirmative" action must be ended. This is a snare and a delusion. Placing a black youngster at a college where his classmates are far better prepared to do the work is no favor to him. Instead of majoring in physics, math, economics or other such taxing field of study, where he could do quite well in one of our major state colleges, or in a historically black university, he gravitates to black studies, or sociology, instead. There, he learns Marxism. That is no way to get ahead. So, banning black studies should be our goal.

⁴ States Becker (1995) on this matter: "It's simple: Hike the minimum wage, and you put people out of work" ; according to Friedman (undated): "A minimum-wage law is, in reality, a law that makes it illegal for an employer to hire a person with limited skills"; in the view of Sowell (1995) this law is akin to "Repealing the Law of Gravity." For more in this vein, see Batemarco, et.al. 2014; Block, 2001; Burkhauser, Couch, Wittenburg, 1996; Cappelli and Block, 2012; Deere, Murphy and Welch, 1995; Gallaway and Adie, 1995; Galles, 2014; Gitis, 2014; Hamermesh and Welch, 1995; Hanke, 2014A, 2014B; Hazlitt, 1946; Hovenga, Naik and Block, 2013; Howland, 2013; Klein and Dompe, 2007; Leef, 2021; Lingenfelter, et. Al., 2017; McCormick and Block, 2000; Mincer, 1976; Neumark, 2015; Neumark and Wascher, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2000; North, 2014; Powell, 2013; Reisman, 2014; Rothbard, 1988; Rustici, 1985; Vuk, 2006; Williams, 1982

⁵ For the case in favor of privatization of the police, see Bayley and Shearing, 1996; Evans, 2011; Guillory, & Tinsley, 2009; Hoppe, 2011; Huebert, 2010; Murphy, 2005; Nalla and Newman, 1991; Rothbard, 1973, 1975, 1998 [1982]; Shearing and Stenning, 1988; Swol, Karen. 1997; Stringham, 2007; Tannehills[1970] 1984; Tinsley, 1998-1999; Wiśniewski, 2014; Wollstein, 1969; Woolridge, 1970.

As an interim measure, Rome cannot be built in a day, at least let us advocate, that some of our own best scholars be mentioned in courses of that sort, not only Marxists. For example, James Ahiakpor, George Ayittey, Richard B. Boddie, Hugh Coleman, Larry Elder, Glenn Loury, Lipton Matthews, John McWorter, Jason Riley, Tavis Smiley, Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele, Virgil Storr, Clarence Thomas, Armstrong Williams, Walter Williams.⁶ Yes, there is such a thing as academic freedom, which must be respected. However, if scholars of this sort were hired in the first place, our students would then be able to hear and read at least a sliver of the free market philosophy.

One of the least appreciated effects of so-called “affirmative action” is that black students need not study too hard; it would presumably be racist to fail any of them. So, instead, they become involved in all sorts of issues irrelevant to education. For example, demanding separate graduations, separate dorms, separate studies (black “studies”), separate spaces on campus. At this rate, they will soon be calling for separate toilets and drinking fountains.

However, I applaud the courage it took them for these initiatives. Maybe this will hasten the end of affirmative action given the loopholes in the recent Supreme Court decision on this matter and the determination of do-gooding “progressive” administrators to cleave to this anti-black program. After all, if blacks are on campus in part so that students of different races can intermingle, and blacks refuse to do so on the basis of these segregationist demands of theirs, this will tend to weaken evil affirmative action.

There is no “affirmative action” in operation for the National Football League, nor the National Basketball Association. Both are heavily dominated by superb black athletes. What of the very few white professional players in these leagues. They are there, too, because of merit, not skin color. Imagine if matters were different. If such pros were allowed into these leagues not because of their ability to shoot baskets or carry around a football, but due to their skin color. That would be humiliating for them. Well, the same applies in academia to those victimized by this program.

Sowell (1994, 232) calls these attempts on the part of blacks to separate themselves from the larger community “Balkanization.” This is what he has to say about such attempts. He mentions:

“... the grim implications for organized attempts to Balkanize societies in the name of cultural ‘identity’ or of ‘multiculturalism,’ as in the late twentieth-century America, Britain, Canada or Australia for example. Quite aside from ideological hidden agendas behind these efforts, the organized government-subsidized cultural fragmentation of a nation artificially recreate the effects of natural geographic barriers which have constricted the cultural universe for so many peoples, with such traffic results, in various parts of the world.”

Here is Sowell’s (1994, 238) brilliant attempt to explain the economic backwardness of sub-Saharan Africa due to this “Balkanization,” unfortunately supported by all too many black spokesmen:

⁶ I have herein placed these important scholars in alphabetical order, but truth to tell, Prof. Sowell stands head and shoulders above all the rest in my humble opinion. That he has not yet won the Nobel Prize in economics besmirches that award.

“Although Africans are less than 10 percent of the human race, their many languages are on-third of all the languages in the world, one index of their cultural fragmentation. The great number of languages and dialects in Africa, besides being a symptom of this cultural fragmentation, constitute as well a severe handicap in themselves, inhibiting effective economics or political consolidation of numerous separate peoples.”

The same applies to misconstrued initiatives in the black community to “buy black” or to in a myriad of other ways support black owned businesses. No. Like everyone else, African Americans should patronize retailers who offer the best bargains, whether they be white, black or polka-dotted chartreuse people from Mars (Tate and Block, 2022). Malcolm X was guilty of this particular type of fragmentation with his Shabazz stores.⁷

7. Acting white

On college campuses throughout the land, black students are reviled, excoriated, teased, denigrated, for “acting white.” All too often what is being loathed is studying hard, staying out of trouble, attending gatherings on time, and engaging in other productive and civilized behavior. This is a grotesque mistake. It holds back the future of the black community when our students are disparaged for being scholarly. Thomas Sowell has warned against this sort of “Balkanization,” separating people from the wider culture. Of course, he himself is commonly denounced for being an “Uncle Tom” or an “Oreo Cookie” by left wing black leaders who have long been leading their people down that proverbial socialist garden path.

8. Tokenism

The idea that the word “black” when referring to people, should be capitalized, is only symbolic. When coupled with the demand that “white” when referring to persons, should not be capitalized, it is just plain silly; even demeaning. I cannot be sure about this, but I suspect this idea emanate from black “studies” departments at major universities.⁸

9. Black poverty and systemic racism

States Lau (2023) “On the notion that the United States is a systemically racist or white supremacist society, Sowell notes that the median incomes of Americans of Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Korean ancestry are higher than those of white Americans. Citing a 2019 U.S. Census Bureau survey, he points out that ‘among full-time, year-round male workers, Asian Indian males earned over \$39,000 a year more than white male full-time, year-round workers’ — an unlikely outcome if white supremacy were pervasive.

Is there “systemic racism” on the part of blacks vis a vis whites and Orientals that the former so heavily dominate the make-up of the National Basketball Association? Of course not. The very idea is ludicrous. Yet, a similar “logic” is employed by those who deduce from the fact that blacks suffer more from poverty than whites, that this is due to “systemic racism” on the part of whites.

⁷ <https://bit.ly/4eQLMgp>

⁸ For a sensible treatment of this silly initiative, see Appiah, 2020. For other views on this matter, including many sill ones, see <https://bit.ly/4wp0u5v>

It does not even begin to account for the fact that when it comes to impoverishment, whites do more poorly than these other Asian groups.

Continues Lau (2023) in this vein: "... as Sowell explains, the poverty rate of Black married-couple families is consistently below the national poverty rate. 'If black family poverty is caused by 'systemic racism,''" he asks, 'do racists make an exception for blacks who are married?'"⁹

This constitutes yet one more indictment of a welfare system that has contributed not so much to the breakup of the black family, but as a causal element in its failure to form in the first place.

10. Conclusion

I am the present author, but I am not a black person. Some critics will say that only African-Americans may properly address the problems faced by the black community. For anyone else to do so reeks of colonialism, of chutzpa, of condescension.

That is a profoundly racist and unscientific perspective. It also commits the ad hominem fallacy. The test of whether it is legitimate for non-African Americans to engage in such analyses is whether or not these points will be of help, or not, to African-Americans. That simply has nothing to do with the racial makeup of the author. Its only proper test is one of truth. Are these good suggestions or not? Will they work? If implemented, will they help improve the lot of black people or not?

Are white doctors not to be allowed to have black patients? Are white dentists to be forbidden to deal with dental health for African Americans. Is it illicit for white psychotherapists not to analyze troubled black people? If this is all nonsense, and it is, then so is opposition to a white economist attempting to improve the lot of the black community. In a civilized society, we all help each other.

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⁹ Notice, however, that Lau capitalizes "black" while Sowell does not.

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