

Equality and the American Creed: Understanding the Affirmative Action Debate

by **Seymour Martin Lipset**
Senior Scholar, Progressive Policy Institute

Introduction

Affirmative action policies, perceived as special preferences for blacks, other defined minorities such as Native Americans, Hispanics and certain groups of Asians, and women, have introduced a new approach to promoting equality in American life. The old approach, initially voiced in the Declaration of Independence, emphasized equality for individuals, defined as equality of opportunity. The new approach focuses on equality for groups, defined as equality of result. It is the collision of these two views on equality that underlies the growing public controversy over affirmative action and quotas.

In order to understand how these perspectives fit into the American debate, this essay examines their origins in the diverse experiences of whites and blacks. The central argument here is that affirmative action policies have forced a sharp confrontation between two core American values: egalitarianism and individualism. It is the egalitarian element in the American Creed that created the consensus behind the civil rights revolution of the past 30 years. But the more recent focus of the civil rights movement, with its emphasis on substantive equality and preferential treatment, forced the country up against the individualistic, achievement-oriented element in the Creed. As a result, the consensus has been broken. Most Americans make a critical distinction between compensatory action and preferential treatment. Compensatory action involves measures to help disadvantaged groups catch up to the standards of competition set by the larger society -- examples include Head Start and other education programs, federal college aid, job training, community development. Preferential treatment involves suspending those standards -- adopting quotas or other devices that favor citizens on the basis of their membership in groups rather than on the basis of merit. While most Americans support the former, public opinion polls show that majorities of blacks and whites consistently oppose the latter.

The essay concludes with suggestions for refocusing affirmative action on its original goal of guaranteeing equal treatment to individuals. New strategies for enabling members of minority groups to move into the social and economic mainstream should be universalistic or linked to variable traits, such as poverty, rather than to race, gender or ethnicity. Examples include a nationwide system of job apprenticeship for all non-college-bound youths and a civilian version of the G.I. Bill that encourages young people to earn money for college or training by volunteering for service in their communities. The ultimate goal remains, as Lyndon Johnson stressed a generation ago, greater equality of opportunity within a free market economy. Two Views on Equality

From its inception, the United States has been composed of two peoples whose values and outlook stem from radically different experiences. The dominant or majority view, as explicated in the American Creed and described in the writings of many foreign sociological observers of the country, has been characterized by an emphasis on social egalitarianism, respect across class lines, equality of opportunity, and meritocracy. The minority view, identified with the situation of black Americans, has clearly been for most of American history a system of explicit hierarchy, of caste, of inequality related to hereditary origins.¹

The American Creed can be subsumed in five terms: liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism (the rule of the people) and laissez-faire. As Alexis de Tocqueville noted, egalitarianism, in its American meaning, has emphasized equality of opportunity and of respect, not of result or condition.² These values reflect the absence of feudal structures and monarchies and aristocracies. As a new society, the country lacked the emphasis on social hierarchy and deference characteristic of post-feudal cultures. These aspects, as Tocqueville and Max Weber stressed, were reinforced by the country's religious commitment to the "nonconformist", largely congregationally organized, Protestant sects which emphasize voluntarism with respect to the state, and a personal or individual relationship to God, one not mediated by hierarchically organized churches, which predominated in Europe, Canada and Latin America.³ In much of Europe, on the other hand, the historic national values are derivative from strong monarchical and mercantilist states, feudal class and hierarchial religious structures and traditions, which favored an emphasis on hereditary status and family origins.

The importance of these values is also linked, as Friedrich Engels, Max Weber and Antonio Gramsci stressed, to the fact that the United States is the purest bourgeois nation, the least affected by feudal heritages.⁴ The key values endemic in capitalism and industrialism are universalism and achievement. Success in market economies is facilitated by rejection of particularistic obligations, that is of nepotism and other sources of close personal ties. The norms of the market call for meritocracy. An efficient market is open both domestically and abroad. Hiring the best qualified person, whether he or she is black or white, Jewish or Gentile, native or foreign born, is the best way to maximize economic return. The logic of the market dictates selling to those who will pay the most and buying from the lowest priced seller.

A stress on achievement, on moving up in the class system, linked with the widespread belief in individualism and equality of opportunity, has been greater in America than in Europe. On the public policy level, this can be seen most clearly in the early emphasis on the extension of public education to all, as well as the decision to try to give everyone a common education.⁵

It cannot be stressed enough that much in contemporary attitudes and behavior may be explained by the emphasis in the culture on achievement, on getting ahead. As Robert K. Merton has noted, Americans have always believed that everyone (only whites until recently) should try to be a success, regardless of background.⁶ Opinion poll data indicate that this value remains powerful, and that most white people now believe it applies to blacks as well. While understandably ambivalent about the promise of America, a majority of blacks also is committed to the belief that hard work and educational attainment will enable them to get ahead. A Spring 1991 Gallup poll found that both races, "69 percent of whites and 68 percent of blacks say that

African-Americans should focus most of their energy on improving [their] education."⁷

The strength of the achievement norm is related to another one -- universalism. Counterpoised to particularism or special treatment, universalism refers to the belief that everyone should be treated similarly in the marketplace of life without reference to traits stemming from birth, class, religion, ethnicity, gender and color. The treatment of blacks has been the foremost deviation from the American Creed throughout the history of the Republic. If we count American history as starting around 1600, blacks have been here almost from the beginning. However, unlike whites, they spent their first two and a half centuries, that is, until 1865, as slaves. For the next 100 years they largely served as a lower caste group working under explicit or implicit Jim Crow policies, with little opportunity to gain educational or financial resources. Caste systems, whether slavery or segregation, were much more explicitly hierarchial and hereditary than European feudalism. Blacks have only been given a claim to political equality and economic opportunity since the 1960s.

Thomas Jefferson and George Washington voiced their concern over the way the treatment of blacks would affect the future of America. Jefferson wrote in 1781 that, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just."⁸ Anticipating in 1791 the possibility that the country might break up because it could not resolve the problem, George Washington told a friend that if this happened "he had made up his mind to move and be of the northern."⁹ Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration, felt -- correctly as it turned out -- that its proclamation that "all men are created equal" would undermine slavery, and that the idea of equality would have a continuing effect on American politics.

Following the logic of Jefferson's observation, Gunnar Myrdal noted in *An American Dilemma* (1944), his classic analysis of American racism, that white Americans, including most southerners, believe in the Creed, even though their racist practices violate it. From this assumption he concluded that if blacks would organize to vigorously defend their rights and assert that they are mistreated, whites would have to give in. Once they were forced to recognize that blacks were not treated equally, they would have to change their behavior if they wanted to maintain their belief in the Creed.¹⁰ The political successes of the civil rights movement in the sixties showed Myrdal was right. However, in yielding politically, many among the white male political elite also have agreed to group rights, to a form of equality of results.

The value system of white Americans has stressed the individual.¹¹ Citizens have been expected to demand and protect their rights on a personal basis. The exceptional emphasis on law in the United States as compared with Europe, derived from the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, has stressed individual rights against the state and other powers. The experience of black Americans, however, has focused on group characteristics, on defining and treating people not according to their personal merits, but according to their ancestry, their race, and their ethnic group.

Post-feudal Europe, too, was organized in particularistic terms, that is, according to class background. European workers and American blacks thus share a stress on class and group solidarity and collective remedies. However, Europe was less stringently stratified than the post-slavery system in the United States. Thus pre-World War II America differed from Europe

in two ways: 1) for its large white majority it was much more egalitarian, individualistic and populist; 2) for its black minority it was much more hierarchial and particularistic, group defined, and less free.

The European Comparison

Americans traditionally have preferred to open the door to opportunity by expanding and integrating education, and consequently have been less approving than others of social welfare spending. A comprehensive analysis of attitudes toward public policies over the past 20 years -- mainly in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries -- reports that "the United States is consistently at the bottom in its support for different kinds of social welfare benefits." The one issue "on which Americans fare much better -- and often the best -- compared with other nations...[is] educational opportunity, assistance and spending." And as the authors, Robert Shapiro and John Young, note, these attitudes stem "from Americans' views and values concerning individualism and the equality of opportunity, as opposed to equality of outcomes for individuals."¹²

For much of this century, America has spent proportionately much more public money on education than Europe, while the latter devotes more resources to welfare. The recent record bears out this generalization. As of 1981 about one-fifth, 20.8 percent, of the American GDP was devoted to social expenditures including education, as compared with over a quarter, 25.6 percent, as an average for all OECD countries. America spent 26.4 percent of its total social expenditures on education compared with an OECD average of 22.7 percent. Thus, the United States was even further behind other developed nations in social welfare spending than the overall social spending data indicate.¹³

From early on in the nineteenth century the United States has led the world in the proportion of its population completing various levels of mass education (elementary and high schools). And while America also predominated in the ratio of those attending college and university or completing tertiary education, its lead in this respect has grown dramatically since World War II.

In contrast to America, most European countries devoted a much larger share of their GDP and public funds to improving the living conditions of their working classes. Since the 1930s the European social democrats have had frequent opportunities to hold office and have been able to follow through on improving the situation of the working class, by emphasizing group improvement policies. But they preserved the elite high schools and failed to focus on the expansion of university education.¹⁴

Civil Rights and Affirmative Action

In the U.S., the caste-like conditions facing black Americans became politically salient from the 1950s on, and resulted, as in Europe, in efforts to find solutions at the group level. These have been defined as affirmative action. The term, originally used in civil rights discussions in the early 1960s, has had two meanings. The first, which emerged in the Kennedy-Johnson administrations, involved attempts to incorporate blacks into the meritocratic race for success.

Perhaps the best statement enunciating the logic of this policy was Lyndon Johnson's Howard University speech in 1965. In it he said that we want all Americans to engage in the race, but some are not able to do so because they arrive at the starting line with shackles on their legs. He therefore called for policies to remove these chains so that they could compete equally. These became the War on Poverty, subsuming greater spending for education through programs such as Head Start, community action, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and other programs to strengthen the lower-class, predominantly black, families. The policies were intended to increase opportunities for the poorest blacks and whites, to enable them to enter integrated and better financed schools where they would acquire the skills needed to succeed.

These programs were backed up by strong Fair Employment and Fair Housing legislation designed to eliminate discrimination, and the effects of prejudice against blacks in the work place, the educational and housing markets, and eventually such caste-like barriers in social relations as club memberships. The policies were premised on the assumption that equal education and the full extension of political citizenship to blacks, which came with Voting Rights Acts and judicial decisions, meant that blacks, like whites, could press for their legal rights as individuals in the courts and administrative tribunals.¹⁵

The second meaning of affirmative action grew out of concerns that these policies, particularly the anti-discrimination ones, were not working as quickly as was hoped, and that racial barriers still operated in different arenas. This second meaning emphasizes group-based solutions rather than equality of opportunity for individuals. It assumes that the only or the best way to improve the situation of blacks is through special preferences for jobs and educational opportunities.

Ironically, affirmative action quotas were first introduced in 1970 by the Nixon Administration, through administrative fiat. Assuming that society imposed disadvantages on blacks -- educational, motivational, social, and racial -- various Nixon appointees concluded that these could be countered only by giving blacks special advantages as a group.

Such policies did not derive primarily from specific demands made by blacks or the American Left; rather they seemed to represent an innovative effort by segments of the white elite to meet the objectives of the civil rights movement, its drive for equality.¹⁶ George Schultz, Nixon's first Secretary of Labor, and Leonard Garment, the President's Counsel, concluded in 1970 that redress to courts and administrative agencies for anti-discrimination judgments would take too long and would not do enough to open the labor market to blacks. With the help of then Labor Solicitor Laurence Silberman, who wrote an extensive brief asserting that racial job targets were legal exercises of Presidential powers under the 5th Amendment's due process clause, Schultz issued an administrative order which provided for a quota for black apprentices in the Philadelphia construction industry, an area in which both employers and unions were cooperating to keep blacks out. The policy was soon extended to other cities. Similar programs were pressed with regard to faculty and students in higher education by other Nixon office holders, with the approval of the president.¹⁷

In explaining the origins of the policy, Silberman, subsequently a Reagan judicial appointee, wrote that because he and his colleagues were disturbed by the ambiguity of the order issued in

the Johnson Administration requiring "'affirmative action' by government contractors,...[and were] uncomfortable with the image the party of Abraham Lincoln had developed, and most of all because the GOP was anxious to expand employment opportunities for blacks, we launched what I have come to see as a fundamentally unsound policy."18

Also ironically, strong efforts were made to stop these policies by a Johnson appointee, Comptroller of the United States Elmer Staats, the trade union leadership, and most Congressional Democrats. They argued that the anti-discrimination clause of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VII, explicitly outlawed affirmative discrimination. Staats quoted Hubert Humphrey's pledge that nothing in the Act "will give any power to the [Equal Employment Opportunity] Commission or to any court to require hiring, firing, or promotion of employees in order to meet a racial 'quota' or to achieve a racial balance," and the agreement by its liberal Senate floor managers that there would be no "consideration of color...[in] the decision to hire or promote."19 Congress rejected a rider to an appropriations bill which would have explicitly banned quotas. Most Republicans voted against the rider by 124 to 41, while Democrats voted for it by 115-84. Nixon noted: "The Democrats are token oriented -- we are job oriented."20 The parties were soon to reverse roles.

The Nixon and subsequent administrations have applied the principle of "communal rights" to other minorities, as well as to women. This effort, designed to guarantee equal results to groups, has persisted through liberal and conservative administrations, even though opinion polls have reported repeatedly that overwhelming majorities of whites -- both men and women -- and often more than 50 percent of blacks, agree that the principle of equal opportunity should apply to individuals only, that special preferences or quotas should not be accorded to members of groups under-represented in privileged jobs or educational categories. Yet major segments of American elites feel the individualistic emphasis in the national creed has to be amended to provide remedies for blacks.21 This concern has been extended to other groups who are perceived to lack equal rights because of ascriptive or biological traits: Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians (though the success of some of them has undermined their place), women, and the handicapped.

The Case for Group Preferences

During the 1960s, various analysts, but most notably a black scholar, Harold Cruse, then at the University of Michigan, argued that equality of opportunity and formal integration are not enough for blacks. Given a history of oppression and continued discrimination, they require recognition as a unique national minority and group rights over and beyond those sought by other minorities and by the non-black poor.22

Blacks are the minority group in the United States, when the situation is defined in caste terms, blacks and whites. They are better able than persons in any other ethnic, religious, gender or class category, except for Native Americans, to justify a claim for preferential treatment. Beyond the general emphasis on group-oriented policies is a claim for reparations. The argument is simple: white America profited greatly from the 250 years in which blacks were held as slaves and for most of the next 100 years during the Jim Crow period, when they continued to work in a lower economic or lower caste position doing the dirty, lowly paid jobs

of society as maids, unskilled workers in the cities, and stoop laborers in the fields. Parallels are offered to the acknowledgment by Congress of the obligation to compensate Japanese Americans for being incarcerated during World War II and by the German government to pay reparations to Jews and Israel.

In the past, the special advantages given to war veterans probably constitute the most important qualification to the emphasis on meritocracy. They have been given special preference when applying for civil service jobs. Even if a veteran is clearly not quite equal to a non-veteran, in test-scores, experience, or skill, he often will get the job. Veterans also have been given advantages with respect to higher education opportunities and in obtaining home mortgages. These policies are designed to make up for the disadvantages imposed on them by their service in the military.²³

Particularistic values operate to handicap the disadvantaged in all societies. People everywhere tend to hire and to give special preference to those they have ties to: to persons they are related to and to those who are part of the same ethnic, religious, communal or cultural groups as they themselves belong. Blacks to a large extent have not fit into such networks of privilege.

Most institutions do not publicly acknowledge such special preferences. Universities, though meritocratic and universalistic in their explicit values, have had admission policies which provide for particularistic advantages. Many, if not most, of the private universities, including distinguished ones like Harvard, Chicago and Stanford, have given preference, (all other things being equal or even not close to equal), to the children of alumni, faculty, and athletes. There are also many special scholarships and fellowships universities award which are limited to applicants from special regional, gender, ethnic, or religious backgrounds. Some of these, but not all, are now outlawed.

In 1963, I noted: "Perhaps the most important fact to recognize about the current situation of the American Negro is that equality is not enough to assure his movement into the larger society" (*italics in original*).²⁴ Most other minorities and women have required genuine equality of opportunity, not special help. As noted, this has certainly been true for the Jews, as well as most Asian and European immigrant groups. The Jews, the "Confucian" Asians and the East Indians have done better on average than old stock white Americans. In any case, immigrants generally have no claim on American society for preference or special advantage. Whatever handicaps some have as a result of inadequate education, lack of skills, or lack of socialization to the ways of the cities, are clearly not the fault of American society. The data indicate that immigrants, including Hispanics and West Indians, do better economically the longer they stay in the country. Although most of them are not born here, roughly 40 percent of Mexican-Americans are in white collar or higher employment positions today.²⁵

American Public Opinion

Mass opinion remains invariably opposed to preferential treatment for deprived groups.²⁶ Thus the Gallup Poll has repeated the same question five times between 1977 and 1989, with astonishingly constant results:

Some people say that to make up for past discrimination, women and minorities should be given preferential treatment in getting jobs and places in college. Others say that ability as determined by test scores, should be the main consideration. Which point of view comes close to how you feel on the subject?

In each survey, 10 or 11 percent said that minorities should be given preferential treatment, while 81, 83 or 84 percent replied that ability should be the determining factor. When the 1989 answers are differentiated by the respondents' race, blacks were only somewhat more supportive of preferential treatment than whites (14 percent to 7 percent), while a majority of blacks (56 percent) favored "ability, as determined in test scores." Women, it should be noted, responded in an identical way to men, 10 percent supporting preferential treatment, and 85 percent ability.²⁷

The Gallup Poll, working for the Times Mirror Corporation, presented the issue somewhat differently in 1987 and 1990: "We should make every effort to improve the position of blacks and other minorities even if it means giving them preferential treatment." This formulation found more support than the more complex one for preferential treatment, 24 percent agreed in both years, while 71-72 percent disagreed. Blacks are more favorable than whites by 31.5 to 18 percent, but again it is notable that over two-thirds of blacks reject preferential treatment. As with the other Gallup questions, there is little difference between the gender groups, 27 percent favorable among women and 23 percent among men. While over four-fifths of identified Republicans are against preferences, so are two-thirds of the Democrats. A relatively high proportion of those who identify themselves as "strong liberals," 43.1 percent, "endorse preferential treatment," but they constitute only 10 percent of the total sample.²⁸

In Spring 1991, a Newsweek Gallup poll asked: "Do you believe that because of past discrimination against black people, qualified blacks should receive preference over equally qualified whites in such matters as getting into college or getting jobs?" Only 19 percent of whites responded positively, 72 percent said no. Presented in these terms, preference secured a plurality, 48 percent, among blacks, although over two-fifths (42 percent) opposed special advantage for equally qualified blacks even when justified by "past discrimination."

Preferential treatment does somewhat better when it is justified as making up for specific cases of past discrimination, when ability is not posed as an alternative, and when it is limited to blacks and applies only to institutions which have actually discriminated. The New York Times national poll asked on two occasions in 1990: "Do you believe that where there has been job discrimination against blacks in the past, preference in hiring or promotion should be given to blacks today?" Both times, roughly one-third of the entire sample, said yes. But small majorities, 51-52 percent, rejected the policy, even under these conditions. Americans, however, will support a policy described as "affirmative action," if it explicitly does not involve quotas, as the ABC News-Wall Street Journal poll found in July 1990. Two-thirds of whites (66 percent), and 84 percent of blacks responded favorable in response to the question: "All in all, do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs in business for blacks, provided there are no rigid quotas?" The Harris organization reported similar results to a comparable question repeated a number of times during the eighties.

A Broken Consensus on Civil Rights

Many of the inconsistencies in American racial attitudes point to a deep contradiction between two values that are at the core of the American Creed -- individualism and egalitarianism. Americans believe strongly in both values. One consequence of this dualism is that political debate often takes the form of one consensual value opposing the other. Liberals and conservatives typically do not take "alternative" positions on issues of equality and freedom. Instead, each side appeals to one or the other core value. Liberals stress the primacy of egalitarianism and the social injustice that flows through unfettered individualism. Conservatives enshrine individual freedom and the social need for mobility and achievement as values "endangered" by the collectivism inherent in liberal nostrums. Both sides treat as their natural constituency the entire American public. In this sense, liberals and conservatives are less opponents than they are competitors, like two department stores on the same block trying to draw the same customers by offering different versions of what everyone wants.

Much of the progress in the early years of the civil rights movement was made by breaking down the "compartmentalization" of the American mind and forcing the public to see that the country's attitudes and institutions fell outrageously short of our egalitarian ideals. It is the egalitarian element in the American Creed that created the consensus behind the civil rights revolution of the past thirty years. But the more recent focus of the civil rights movement, with its emphasis on substantive equality and preferential treatment, forced the country up against the individualistic, achievement-oriented element in the Creed. As a result, the consensus has been broken.

The poll data reveal a "positive," pro-civil rights consensus when only egalitarian questions are at stake but a "negative," anti-civil rights consensus when an issue also pushes up against basic notions of individualism. Thus, on the central issues involving racial discrimination and Jim Crow practices, American public opinion is powerfully against discrimination. Expressed attitudes on these issues have been consistently "liberal," and even the white South has joined the national consensus. The general agreement dissolves, however, when compulsory integration and quotas are involved. Many whites deeply resent such efforts, not because they oppose racial equality, but because they feel they violate their individual freedom. Liberals are quick to point out the inequalitarian consequences of de facto segregation, but the data show that most whites favor individual freedom over compulsory social egalitarianism in racial matters.

Most whites, and many blacks, continue to feel that it is better for disadvantaged groups to work out their problems through individual improvement and mobility than to press collective demands for all members of the group. Most Americans do approve of concrete federal programs to help the disadvantaged and to combat racial discrimination. Given a choice, however, between government intervention to solve social problems and "leaving people on their own" to work out their problems for themselves, the public always chooses the latter option.

Affirmative action policies have forced a sharp confrontation between egalitarian and individualistic values. Most Americans oppose the notion of special treatment for blacks, even when it does not refer to quotas or preferences, since such treatment also violates the notion of equality across racial lines. Thus in an October 1989 ABC News-Washington Post poll, 64

percent of whites and 44 percent of blacks disagreed with the statement: "Because of past discrimination, blacks who need it should get some help from the federal government that white people in similar economic circumstances don't get."

There has been a vast improvement in American attitudes towards blacks, women and other minorities since the fifties. Their claims to full equality are accepted widely.²⁹ There can be no doubt that a large majority of white Americans have come to believe that discrimination is wrong and that government should guarantee the application of the competitive merit or achievement principle to all, blacks and whites. More surprisingly perhaps, the 1991 Gallup-Newsweek poll reports that "72 percent of blacks and 52 percent of whites said that they would prefer to live in a neighborhood that was racially 'half and half' -- more on both sides than felt that way three years ago." Over two-thirds of whites and four-fifths of blacks claim to "know many members of another race well," and almost half of the former (47 percent) and 63 percent of the latter say they "socialize regularly with members of another race." Almost no whites (six percent) report that they would feel "uncomfortable working with members of another race" or "for a boss of another race."³⁰ But every national survey still shows that a sizable majority of whites is also opposed to remedying the effects of past discrimination by giving special consideration to the less formally qualified with respect to hiring or school admissions.

Americans make a critical distinction between compensatory action and preferential treatment. Compensatory action involves measures to help disadvantaged groups catch up to the standards of competition set by the larger society. Preferential treatment involves suspending those standards, to admit or hire members of disadvantaged groups who are unable to meet the same standards as white males. Relatively few object to compensation for past deprivations in the form of special training programs such as Head Start, financial aid and community development funds. Such programs meet with approval from the population because they are consistent with the notion that race and sex have in the past been "imperfections" in the market of free competition -- that is, unjustifiable grounds for denying equality of opportunity to certain categories of individuals.³¹

To return to the image of the shackled runner, Americans are willing to do more than remove the chains. They will go along with special training programs and financial assistance for previously shackled runners, enabling them to catch up with those who have forged ahead because of unfair advantages. But most Americans draw the line at predetermining the results of the competition.

Policies favoring quotas and numerical goals for integration produce a creedal response, since they contradict traditional conceptions of the meaning of equality of opportunity. Americans will accept the argument that race and sex, like poverty generally, are disadvantages deserving of assistance, just as the majority of Americans approved of the New Deal as a justifiable intervention in the free market. They will accept remedial policies up to the point where it is felt that mobility resources have been roughly equalized and the initial terms of competition are once again fair. But the data show that every attempt to introduce any form of absolute preference meets with stiff and determined resistance from the vast majority of Americans, including women and, to a somewhat lesser extent, racial minorities.

In some measure, the distinction between "compensatory action" and "preferential treatment" parallels the distinction drawn between "equality of opportunity" and "equality of results." Compensatory action is probably seen as a way to enhance equality of opportunity. Because blacks have been discriminated against in the past, it is fair to give them special consideration so that they will get a better break in the future. Preferential treatment, on the other hand, probably sounds to most whites like an effort to force equality of results by predetermining the outcome of the competitive process.

The major support for preferential treatment seems to come from the liberal intelligentsia, from the well- educated, five-to-six percent of the population who have gone to graduate school, plus those who have studied in the liberal arts in college. It is also strong among the political elite, particularly Democrats, but many Republicans as well. The Democrats in Congress increasingly support these policies, a change which may flow from the fact that the proportion of Democratic members who can be classified as liberal on the basis of their voting record has increased steadily since the 60's. Although recent court decisions have gone against the enforcement of quota policies, universities continue to press for numerical goals or special preferences. In so doing, they attest to the documented greater strength of political liberalism within them than other institutions in American society. And not surprisingly, the most extensive application of numerical targets in higher education can be found in the humanities and "soft" social sciences, the most left-disposed fields in academe.

Political Implications

As the United States moves into the last decade of the twentieth century, the debate over affirmative action shows no sign of moderating. Rather, the reverse is true. Quotas were a major issue in a number of elections in 1990. The first bill introduced by the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives (H.R. 1) in the 1991 session is a civil rights measure, described by its opponents as a quota bill. The editorial and op-ed pages of the newspapers are replete with polemics and analyses about affirmative action. This development should not be surprising since the issues involve efforts to maintain or change some of the core values of the nation -- individual versus group rights -- and affect feelings about opportunity and security for both races.

The arguments surrounding quotas or preferences are increasingly seen as strengthening the Republicans, who now vigorously emphasize meritocratic standards. Their earlier support for quotas has been forgotten. Most Democrats are uneasy as to how to deal with the issue. They are faced with a dilemma: how to respond to pressure from civil rights groups and the intelligentsia on the one hand, and on the other, how to deal with the fear that a continuing identification with quotas will alienate the party's traditional base of white working class support. In this connection it is interesting to recall that in 1965, in private White House discussions about civil rights programs, Lyndon Johnson said, "We have to press for them as a matter of right, but we also have to recognize that by doing so we will destroy the Democratic Party." He anticipated that significant sections of the white South and the white working class in the North would defect on racial issues.³² The record indicates this has happened, particularly in presidential elections from 1968 to 1988.

How salient is white concern over affirmative action? We know that in 1990 Jesse Helms won in North Carolina while using this issue. Ex-Klansman David Duke emphasized it in Louisiana and received a majority of white votes. And Pete Wilson focused on the quota issue and beat Diane Feinstein in California. The polling evidence suggests that the issue has hurt the Democrats. Many less affluent whites respond to the argument that the number of jobs for them has declined as a result of preference for blacks.³³ Two studies undertaken in 1985 and 1987 by Stanley Greenberg of The Analysis Group, commissioned by the Michigan Democratic party to investigate white, male, blue-collar defections from the party, indicate adverse reactions to affirmative action has played a major role there. A summary of the reports notes:

Much to the surprise and dismay of both Greenberg and his sponsors, white fury over affirmative action emerged as a top voter concern in Greenberg's 1985 report and in a second report in 1987. Quotas and minority preferences were a primary source of anti-government, anti-Democrat anger among white blue-collar voters. Democratic campaign themes such as "fairness," "equity," and "justice" had been perceived - not without justification - as code words for quotas. Therefore, white voters had become in Greenberg's terms, "de-aligned" from the Democratic Party.³⁴

In 1990, California political consultants privately indicated that Feinstein's espousal of quotas in state government employment hurt her significantly in the gubernatorial race. A Democratic pollster's study of voters in Louisiana found that racial issues played an important role in the election there. Geoff Garin reports that the response to one statement distinguishes Duke voters more than anything else: "Qualified whites lose out on jobs and promotions because blacks get special preference due to affirmative action hiring goals." A majority of Duke supporters, 52 percent, said this happens "a lot," as compared to a quarter, 25 percent, of those who backed his opponent.³⁵

National polls reflect the same concern. Two surveys, one conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research in 1986 and the other by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in 1990, found large majorities of whites replying that it is "very likely" (28 percent in both) or "somewhat likely" (48 and 42 percent), "that a white person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified black person gets one instead." The 1986 study indicated that two-fifths of the whites believed that they personally or someone in their family would experience job discrimination. In 1991, a report of a poll sponsored by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights also reported "that many white voters believe there is pervasive reverse discrimination in the work place and that civil rights leaders are more interested in special preferences than in equal opportunity." The proposed Civil Rights Act of 1991 which, according to its proponents, is designed to facilitate lawsuits for remedial action by individuals claiming discrimination, is seen by many white voters as a measure which will lead business to adopt hiring quotas to avoid legal problems. According to one author of the study, Celinda Lake, voters now believe that "whenever legislation or policy distinguishes among groups, business just to get it done, will implement quotas."³⁶

These findings do not imply increased attitudinal backing for discrimination. Rather, as Thomas Edsall notes, Americans continue to show "strong support for basic equalitarian principles, including equality of opportunity and the obligation of employers to give everyone a

fair chance." There is "strong opposition to discrimination practices based on race, gender, age or disability." However, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights study indicates that "civil rights laws are seen by substantial number of voters as creating unfair advantages, setting up rank or class privilege in the labor market."³⁷ And commenting on the same study, black Washington Post columnist William Raspberry emphasizes:

White Americans...do not see themselves as racists, or as opponents of equal opportunity and fundamental fairness. What they oppose are efforts to provide preferential benefits for minorities.... They aren't buying. How could we expect them to buy a product we have spent 400 years trying to have recalled: race-based advantages enshrined into law?³⁸

Black Progress -- A Contentious Issue

Government policies since World War II have resulted in considerable economic progress for blacks. Blacks remain considerably behind whites with regard to income and levels of employment, but as a group they are much better off than they were before the civil rights movement of the sixties and the adoption of various remedial programs.

Awareness of such gains is, however, not widespread. This is partly due to the fact that the leadership of blacks, women and Hispanics, generally do not admit to significant progress. Opinion polls taken in the mid-eighties indicate that three-fifths of the black leaders told pollsters that the situation of blacks was "going backward," while two-thirds of a national black sample said they were "making progress." Support for the latter view declined somewhat in the latter years of the Reagan era.³⁹ In early July 1990, an NBC News-Wall Street Journal poll reported that 60 percent of all blacks said that, compared to 10 years ago, blacks in America are "better off," while 29 percent reported the group is "worse off."

The refusal of some black leaders to acknowledge improvement is understandable. The heads of groups seeking more from society and from the state justify their demands by referring to the way in which existing institutions and policies work against them. The worse things appear, and the greater the discrepancy seems between themselves and others, the more they can demand. Yet, the repeated emphasis on how little progress has been made serves to sustain the argument that purposeful social action designed to benefit blacks simply does not work, that there are factors inherent in the situation of black Americans which prevent them from getting ahead. Not only most whites, but many blacks have absorbed such negative images. They believe that what determines success or failure is hard work, regardless of whether a person is black or white. Hence if blacks fail, it follows that it is largely their own fault.

The data are consistent in this area. The NORC found that during 1985-89, 62 percent of whites and 36 percent of blacks agreed that the reason why blacks on average have worse jobs, incomes and housing than white people, is that "most blacks just don't have the motivation or will power to pull themselves out of poverty." More surprisingly, an ABC News-Washington Post poll taken in October 1989 found that 60 percent of whites and 60 percent of blacks agreed with the statement: "If blacks would try harder, they could be just as well off as whites." The same survey found 52 percent of blacks and 56 percent of whites accepting the view that, "Discrimination has unfairly held down blacks, but many of the problems blacks in this country

have today are brought on by blacks themselves." A Gallup Poll conducted in December 1989 reported similar results in response to the question: "Who do you think is more to blame for the present conditions in which blacks find themselves -- white people or blacks themselves?" A small majority (55 percent) hold blacks responsible, while only 18 percent say whites, and the same percentage, 18, "feel that whites and blacks are equally to blame for their current situation....However, even among blacks it is more common to blame blacks themselves (34 percent) than it is to blame whites (22 percent)."⁴⁰

Such beliefs have negative consequences. First, they reinforce racist attitudes and stereotypes. Whites increasingly seem to believe that they, or their officials, have done a great deal for blacks, but since the situation does not appear to be improving, there must be something wrong with them. In early January 1991, the NORC released the results of a survey taken in 1990. It indicates that most whites believe that blacks are less intelligent, lazier, more violence-prone, and more inclined to prefer to stay on welfare than whites and four other ethnic groups they were asked about.

The same set of beliefs also undermines black morale and ambition. Reports of little improvement, even of retrogression, tell blacks that they cannot succeed. Black youth are told that the society is against them and that there is, therefore, no point in trying to study or work hard. Large numbers of blacks develop or retain the same invidious stereotypes about themselves as many whites do. These feed into feelings of self-hatred. These negative images are sustained by the significantly higher levels of social morbidities among poor blacks, concentrated in the ghettos of central cities where they are highly visible to the media and to the population at large. Reports pour out emphasizing the disproportionate presence of blacks in urban crime and homelessness, as well as the considerable percentage they form of the imprisoned, their high infant mortality, adult illness and early death rates, and so forth. But social scientists estimate that the underclass, both black and white, is small. William Julius Wilson, the social scientist most responsible for the focus on the urban underclass, now identifies the ghetto poor, a term he prefers, as those living in "areas of extreme poverty, that is, those in which 40 percent of the people are poor."⁴¹ Though much studied and publicized, such metropolitan census tracts contained "little more than one percent of the U.S. population in 1980."⁴² An Urban Institute group reaches a similar low figure, noting that "if one uses multiple criteria such as being persistently poor, living in a poor neighborhood, and being engaged in dysfunctional behavior...most of the available estimates suggest the underclass [black and white] is small -- probably in the neighborhood of 2 or 3 million people in 1980."⁴³ About two-thirds of them are black, a fifth are Hispanic.⁴⁴ Still the number living in such underclass areas is growing, even if the total remains small.⁴⁵

The large segment of successful, middle class or working class blacks, living in stable families outside the inner cities, is not visible to ghetto blacks and is largely ignored by whites.⁴⁶ Ironically, as Richard P. Nathan notes, the identification of blacks generally with the ghetto poor stems from the fact that "members of racial minority groups who are educated, talented, and motivated can assimilate in ways that a generation ago would have been thought inconceivable."⁴⁷ Few note that blacks who "make it" move out.⁴⁸

It is important, therefore, to recognize that the situation of a major portion of black America

has improved dramatically. The proportion of blacks who are high school dropouts has fallen significantly, from 31 percent in 1970 to 18 percent in 1988, while that of whites has not changed: it has been 14 percent in both years. Blacks, as of 1988, make up 6.3 percent of all college graduates, up from 4.5 percent in 1980.⁴⁹ While there is a great deal of debate about the definition of poverty, census data indicate that the percentage of blacks living in poverty declined from 55 percent in 1959 to 33.5 percent in 1970. Although the level moved up somewhat in the early eighties, it fell to 30.7 percent in 1989, far below what it was in 1959.⁵⁰

Two economists, James P. Smith and Finis R. Welch, who analyzed changes in the situation of blacks since World War II, note "the real story of the last forty years has been the emergence of the black middle class," which "as a group...outnumbers the black poor."⁵¹ The proportion of the black population living in the urban ghettos is steadily declining. The majority of blacks have steady jobs, and are either middle class or members of what may be called the yeoman regularly employed working class. They are married or in stable long-term relationships. The income of married blacks is 77 percent of that of comparable whites, which is again a considerable increase from well below 60 percent two decades ago. Black married couples have birth rates which are similar to those of whites; they are low, below the point necessary for the reproduction of the population.⁵² Middle-class black fertility is lower than the white middle-class rate.⁵³

As a panel established by the National Academy of Sciences notes:

Conditions within the black community began to diverge sharply in the 1970s. This divergence can be seen very clearly in the experience of young men. By the early 1980s, black men aged 25-34 with at least some college, earned 80-85 percent as much as their white counter-parts. They also achieved some gains in private-sector white-collar positions. In terms of education, these black men represented the top one-third of their age group. At the other end of the group were the one-quarter of black men aged 25-34 who had not finished high school and who could not compete in the stagnant 1970s economy. An increasing number dropped out of the labor force altogether....⁵⁴

The authors emphasize "that the two most numerically important components of the black class structure have become a lower class dominated by female-headed families and a middle class largely composed of families headed by a husband and wife."⁵⁵ Most black adults live in stable family and economic situations while most black children do not. They are the offspring of the large number of black women who are single mothers, not supported by, nor living with, a male head of household. Recent statistics indicate that 56 percent of all black births are out of wedlock. The proportion of black children born in female-headed households was 23 percent in 1960, 28 percent in 1969, 45 percent in 1980 and is 62 percent today.⁵⁶ Hence, while most adult blacks are doing relatively well, most black children are doing badly. Incomes of the black female-headed households are well below that of married blacks. "The poverty rate for two-parent black families with children was 12.5 percent in 1988, for single-parent families with children, the poverty rate was 56.3 percent."⁵⁷

A sophisticated analysis of the relationship of gender to poverty by Victor Fuchs demonstrates that the large proportion of women in single-parent situations in large measure

accounts for the continued disproportionate presence of poverty among blacks.⁵⁸ But these statistics stem much less from an increase in the numbers of out-of-wedlock births as from a severe fall-off in the birth rate of married black females, while child-bearing among the unmarried has increased slightly.⁵⁹ As Christopher Jencks notes, had married black women continued to have as many babies in 1987 as they did in 1960, "the proportion of black babies born out of wedlock would have risen only from 23 percent in 1960 to 29 percent by 1987." But because of the drop in marital pregnancies, the ratio of illegitimate to legitimate went up from 23 percent to 62 percent.⁶⁰

It is doubtful that affirmative action policies or quotas have done or will do much for the socially fatherless black ghetto youth, who grow up in poverty and receive an inferior education at best. "Black [young] men with less than a high school degree consistently earned the smallest proportion of their white counterparts' income."⁶¹ Many simply do not have marketable skills which enable them to be considered for well-rewarded positions. In any case, the federally enforced contract compliance program has "raised demand for black males more in highly skilled white-collar and craft jobs than in the blue-collar operative, laborer, and service occupations." Litigation efforts using the anti-discrimination section of the Civil Rights Act (Title VII) have led to considerable gains in white-collar positions, especially in professional and managerial employment.⁶² As William Julius Wilson has emphasized, "affirmative action programs are not designed to deal with the unique problems of the black poor -- problems which have devastatingly affected the makeup of underclass families."⁶³ The policies are much more likely to benefit minority individuals from the most advantaged families...[who are] most qualified for preferred positions - such as higher-paying jobs, college admissions, promotions and so forth. Accordingly, if policies of preferential treatment for such positions are conceived not in terms of the actual disadvantages suffered by individuals but rather in terms of race or ethnic group membership, then these policies will further enhance the opportunities of the more advantaged without addressing the problems of the truly disadvantaged.⁶⁴

Comparisons of the relationship between educational and economic attainments within each racial group indicate that the advantage of college attendance is much greater among blacks. And a study of education, occupational mobility and earnings from 1974 and 1981 of young males (18-35) also indicates that "Black college graduates obtain more prestigious posts than their white counterparts," a result attributed by the researchers to "employer sensitivity to affirmative action requirements," as well as the "concentration of educated blacks in the public sector."⁶⁵ This pattern, however, was to decline in the next decade with the recession of the early 80's and the halt in the growth of government employment. By the late 1980s the "earning gap between blacks and whites with college education widened sharply," a phenomenon which occurred generally between all more and less advantaged sectors.⁶⁶

The implication that there is relatively little reverse discrimination for lower skill positions is sustained by the result of an Urban Institute study, which sent equally qualified whites and blacks to apply for general labor, service, retail and clerical positions in Chicago and Washington in 1990. It reported whites were treated better in job interviews in 20 percent of the cases compared to 7 percent for blacks, and were more likely to be hired. One finding of this research is heartening; there was no discrimination in three-quarters of the interviews. But blacks are still much more likely to suffer from racism in working class job markets than whites

are to experience reverse discrimination.⁶⁷

Equality: A Comparative Perspective

It is important to recognize that white opposition to various forms of special governmental assistance for blacks and other minorities is in part a function of a general antagonism to statism and a preference for personal freedom in the American value system. As noted earlier, the American Creed subsumes classical liberalism, which strongly distrusts the state and emphasizes competitive meritocracy.⁶⁸

The findings of comparative survey research completed in the early eighties show that the contemporary opposition to preferential treatment for blacks or other underprivileged minorities is not primarily a result of racial prejudice. The results point to varying attitudes about equality of result in the United States, Canada and eleven West European countries. Interviewees in each country were told:

I'd like to relate an incident to you and ask your opinion of it. There are two secretaries, of the same age, doing practically the same job. One of the secretaries finds out that the other earns 20 dollars [100 marks, Kroner, etc.] a week more than she does. She complains to her boss. He says, quite rightly, that the other secretary is quicker, more efficient and more reliable at her job. In your opinion, is it fair or not fair that one secretary is paid more than the other?

The question is clearly and intentionally biased in favor of obtaining the reply that the more productive secretary should be paid more, and large majorities in North America and Europe answered this way. However, twice the proportion of Europeans (33 percent), as of Americans (17 percent), said that it is unfair to pay more to the more efficient and more reliable person. Or conversely, Americans were more likely to believe in distinguishing by merit.

The same studies found comparable cross-national difference with respect to classic statements which emphasize personal liberty and individual initiative versus a reduction of class differences. Respondents were asked:

Which of these two statements come closest to your own opinion? I find that both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to make up my mind for one or the other, I would consider personal freedom more important, that is, everyone can live in freedom and develop without hindrance. Certainly both freedom and equality are important. But if I were to make up my mind for one of the two, I would consider equality more important, that is, that nobody is underprivileged and that social class differences are not so strong.

Most people in North America, almost three quarters in the United States and three-fifths in Canada, favored personal liberty over class equality, a pattern replicated to a significantly lesser extent in Britain, France, Holland and Sweden. The individual freedom position was not supported by a majority in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Spain, or by Europe as a whole. On the European continent 49 percent favored freedom and 35 percent equality. In the United States, 72 percent chose freedom and 20 percent for equality. Independent of race or ethnicity considerations, citizens of the United States are significantly less favorable to equality

of income or class position than Europeans.

Although Americans are less willing than Europeans to use government as an instrument of income distribution, their egalitarian values lead them to approve programs to provide more opportunities for blacks. They favor more expenditures on education, for special schools, and other intensive programs such as Head Start. But opinion surveys taken in various developed countries indicate that Americans are much less prone than Europeans and Canadians to endorse measures to help the underprivileged generally. Thus as of 1987, a fifth (21 percent) of Americans agreed that "the government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income," as compared with 50 percent or more in Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and the Netherlands. Similarly, 60 percent or more of the populations of these European countries agreed that "it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes," while only 29 percent of Americans took this view. Comparable cross-national differences were reported with respect to statements dealing with the government's responsibility to "provide a job for everyone who wants one," and a "decent standard of living for the unemployed."⁶⁹

The pattern of greater American opposition to state intervention is not solely a matter of resistance to measures that help the economically deprived. It applies generally. Thus slightly less than half (49 percent), of Americans feel that "the wearing of seat belts should be required by law," while four-fifths or more of samples of Europeans and Australians hold this view. Americans are also less likely to agree than Australians and Europeans with the statement that it should be "the government's responsibility to provide industry with the help it needs to grow."⁷⁰

Public opinion research indicates that Americans, including most blacks, believe that this is still a land of opportunity. They not only believe in meritocracy, but they think that it exists. As of 1988, according to the NORC, 71 percent of Americans said that they have a good chance of improving their standard of living, many more proportionally than Italians (43 percent), Germans (36 percent), British (36 percent) and Dutch (23 percent). Although more Americans go to college than people in any other country, close to two-thirds of Americans (65 percent) say that the opportunity to go to college should be increased. This figure is higher than among British (55 percent), or Germans (31 percent). These views tie in with the greater propensity of Americans than Europeans to believe that "ambition is [essential or very important] for getting ahead in life."⁷¹

Conclusion: Refocusing Affirmative Action

Affirmative action policies challenge the basic American tenet that rights to equal treatment should be guaranteed to individuals, and that remedial preferences should not be given to groups. And given the strength of individualism in the American tradition, it is not surprising that most Americans, including a considerable majority of women and a plurality of blacks, have continued to reject applying the emphasis on protected rights to groups.

The countries which have most thoroughly enshrined group quotas into their basic law, India, Pakistan, and Canada, are strongly organized on group lines; the first two recognize

castes, the third, separate linguistic cultures.⁷² The first affirmative action quotas in India for the scheduled (untouchable) castes go back to the twenties. They were first introduced in a few provinces in colonial India, and have been enlarged and expanded considerably by independent India and Pakistan. The Canadian Constitution has always contained provisions to protect linguistic and religious minorities and has been somewhat more limited in protection of individual rights than ours. More recently, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which was added to the Constitution in 1982, specifically authorizes programs and activities directed to, "the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."⁷³ Canada and its provinces have explicitly defined more than thirty such groups as worthy of special treatment; behavior which conforms to its founding decision to emphasize the protection of groups, rather than individuals.

The same logic has been used by various analysts to account for the absence of significant socialist movements and the low level of class politics in the United States and the obverse patterns in Europe. The evidence and arguments suggest that the European developments reflect the influence of post-feudal relationships, which explicitly structured the social hierarchy according to fixed social classes, requiring the lower statused to show deference to their class superiors. Consequently, the emerging working class there reacted to the political world in class terms. Conversely, white America, the purest bourgeois and classically liberal society in the world, has treated class as an economic construct. Social classes have been of limited visibility compared with the situation in Europe.⁷⁴ Hence, class-conscious politics and socialist demands for equality of results have been limited in scope. Walter Dean Burnham has summarized this overall thesis: "No feudalism, no socialism: with these four words one can summarize the basic sociocultural realities that underlie American electoral politics in the industrial era."⁷⁵

The situation of black Americans is analytically comparable to that of the European underprivileged strata. The post-caste situation has, in fact, been even more explicit in limiting the economic and social opportunities of the socially oppressed than the post-feudal ones. It is not surprising, therefore, that American blacks are more group conscious than European workers; or that many support a version of the old socialist emphasis on equality of results. Ninety percent of American blacks vote Democratic, much more than any other ethnic group or trade union members. Many blacks support Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow Coalition, a group which, explicit race issues apart, is more supportive of strong income redistribution policies and heavy state involvement in the economy than socialists in other countries.⁷⁶

Blacks, as we have seen from the opinion poll data, are divided as to how much to support group uplift policies as distinct from an emphasis on extending opportunities for individual achievement. This debate goes back at least to the Reconstruction period when in 1871 the celebrated black abolitionist and civil rights leader, Frederick Douglass, ridiculed the idea of racial quotas, as suggested by Martin Delany, as "absurd as a matter of practice," noting that it implied blacks "should constitute one-eighth of the poets, statesmen, scholars, authors and philosophers." Douglass emphasized that "natural equality is a very different thing from practical equality; and...though men may be potentially equal, circumstances may for a time cause the most striking inequalities."⁷⁷ On another occasion, in opposing "special efforts" for the black freedmen, Douglass argued that they "might 'serve to keep up very prejudices, which it

is so desirable to banish' by promoting an image of blacks as privileged wards of the state."⁷⁸

Practical equality is still not with us, and 120 years after Douglass voiced opposition to quotas, writer Shelby Steele concludes that "affirmative action has shown itself to be more bad than good and that blacks...now stand to lose more from it than they gain."⁷⁹ Like Douglass, he rejects the idea for leaping "over the hard business of developing a formerly oppressed people to the point where they can achieve proportionate representation on their own..." He sees affirmative action quotas as undermining black morale, contributing to "an enlargement of self-doubt," for racial preferences engender the implication that successful blacks have not earned their positions, that they are inferior to whites at their achievement level.⁸⁰

The recurrent conflict between different versions of equality, between emphasis on the individual and on the group, will continue in all free societies. The former has been stronger in America than in Europe. The failures of different varieties of socialism and the greater acceptance of the market as the dynamic force underlying economic growth in Europe has led to a revival of classical liberalism, of an emphasis on competitive meritocracy and individualism. Conversely, the increased awareness of and better organization of the blacks in America has given more support than ever before to group linked efforts to reduce inequality.⁸¹ Can these conflicts be resolved? Who will yield in this clash of values? The answer as usual for such macroscopic cleavages is neither and both. Lyndon Johnson was on the right track when he emphasized the need for government action to eliminate the chains. But the ultimate goal, as he noted, is greater equality of opportunity within a free market economy.

It is crucial that civil rights leaders, liberals and Democrats rethink the politics of special preference. The American Left from Jefferson to Humphrey stood for making equality of opportunity a reality. And by a supreme irony, the man most hated by contemporary Democrats, Richard Nixon, created a situation which has placed them on the wrong side of the issue from national values and electoral standpoints. The leadership of some of the party's strongest bases of support, blacks and other minorities, feminists, liberals and the intelligentsia, all strongly endorse numerical preferences, targets, quotas. But, as noted, a considerable majority of Americans, including most Democrats, oppose them. If the Democrats are to regain control of the White House, they must find a way back to the civil rights position they took until the late sixties -- to an emphasis on equal rights for individuals, and advocacy of social programs that are universalistic or linked to variable traits, such as poverty, not hereditary or biological characteristics.

To rebuild the national consensus on civil rights and racial justice, affirmative action should be refocused, not discarded. It is clear, for example, that quotas or special preferences will not help the poorly educated and unskilled to secure good jobs. To succeed in post-industrial society requires good education. Extending and vastly improving education in the ghettos from very early Head Start programs to financial incentives for students, teachers, and schools which do well, and expanding youth apprentice programs that combine classroom instruction and on-the-job training, are the direction to be followed for children and school age youth. Such programs should be offered to all less privileged people, regardless of racial and ethnic origins.

The experience of blacks in the military suggests a way for young adults. In recent years the

armed services have offered blacks an opportunity for stable employment, career training and upward mobility. The whole society can stand to learn from the success of a performance-oriented institution in integrating blacks and whites and offering real opportunity to move up. That experience argues in favor of a large-scale national service effort. If all youth are encouraged to volunteer for duty in national service, those with inadequate education and skills could be trained for positions which are in demand, while helping to rebuild publicly supported infrastructures or deliver social services. Studies of the experience of the economically disadvantaged in the military could shed much light on the subject.

Moving away from policies that emphasize special preferences need not -- indeed, must not -- mean abandoning the nation's commitment to guaranteeing equal opportunity for disadvantaged citizens. The concept of individual rights remains integral to the American Creed. Yet racial injustice and caste-like divisions have constituted a contradiction to the organizing principles of the nation. The American dilemma is still with us, and with it a moral obligation to ensure that race is neither a handicap nor an advantage. Until black Americans are absorbed fully into the economy and society, we should, in Jefferson's words, continue to fear a just God.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

One of America's most distinguished political sociologists, Seymour Martin Lipset holds the Hazel Chair of Public Policy at George Mason University, and is a Senior Scholar at the Progressive Policy Institute and a Senior Fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution. Lipset is the author or co-author of 20 books or monographs, has edited another 20 books, and has published more than 300 articles in the fields political sociology, social stratification, public opinion and the sociology of intellectual life. His most recent book was *Continental Divide: The Institutions and Values of the United States and Canada*, and in 1990 the Progressive Policy Institute published his monograph, *Political Renewal on the Left: A Comparative Perspective*.

Lipset received the MacIver prize for his book, *Political Man*, the Gunner Myrdal Prize for *The Politics of Unreason*, and the Townsend Harris Medal. He has been judged the most frequently cited author in political science. Lipset is a former president of the American Political Science Association, and he joined the Progressive Policy Institute in 1989.

NOTES

1 Curiously, many of the classic writings about the United States in the 19th century, which stressed its exceptional character as an egalitarian society, even those written by people who were strongly abolitionist in their sentiments, either ignored the position of blacks, or cited it as a major exception to the pattern which would in time inevitably change and be incorporated into the larger system.

2 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 51.

3 *Ibid*, p. 312.

4 For previous discussion and references see S. M. Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 25.

5 It is interesting to read the works of Horace Mann and others writing in the 1830s and 1840s in support of the common school. By this term, they meant what today is called the integrated school. They insisted that the public schools should be common to all, rich and poor, children of immigrants and of natives. This goal, of course did not include blacks, most of whom were slaves at the time. The strength of this early American commitment to meritocracy and competitive achievement may be seen in the many writings which consciously rejected the European class differentiated education system. To foster equality of opportunity, the educational reformers held up for scorn European academic high schools, the gymnasia in Germany, the lycees in France, the grammar or public schools in England, which only served the top ten percent of the population at best. As they noted, in Europe, other youth were not supposed to obtain skills which would permit them to move up. They could not go to high school. As urban industrial jobs developed, the children of the underprivileged were allowed to attend vocational schools. American educators and politicians rejected this model as fostering a class society. Rather, as noted, they pressed for education in a common school. These trans-Atlantic variations continued deep into the twentieth century, as many European countries maintained academically high standard schools attended by a small privileged minority, destined for university.

The vitality of the early stress on meritocratic values is attested by one of the most remarkable and curious developments in American history, the emergence in the late 1820s of the first political groups in the world to be known as Workingmen's parties. In New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and other cities, these parties received between ten and fifteen percent of the vote in local and state elections. They later merged with Democrats during the subsequent Jacksonian period. Some of the Workingmen's parties, particularly the one in New York City, advocated the most radical policy any political party has ever put forth: the nationalization of children, sending them away to boarding school from age six on. The Workingmen were not socialists, they believed in private property; they wanted people to strive to get ahead to become rich, precisely because they favored a more open, more competitive society. Common schools in their view were not sufficient to foster egalitarianism. Attending the same school for five or six hours a day would not change the basic environment of children of diverse social origins. They contended that the only way to eliminate the advantage which family and neighborhood environment give the affluent is to require that all students spend 24 hours a day in the same place, in a state-financed boarding school.

In effect, the Workingmen clearly linked class-based cultural advantage to the perpetuation of inequality. Their solution, as noted, was to take all white children away from their parents, one clearly linked to a comparable proposal made by Plato millennia ago. That "solution," I submit, is the most drastic proposal ever made by a political organization. It is much more extreme than nationalizing all the property in the country.

Not surprisingly, the Workingmen did not gain power. They were, however, able to elect members to legislatures and city councils. The fact that a party with this radical plank could get ten to fifteen percent of the vote in New York City, indicates that during the first half century of

the republic, at the time of slavery, there was a strong commitment to the value of equality of opportunity for whites, which was linked to a belief in a competitive market economy. Edward Pessen, *Most Uncommon Jacksonians* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1967), pp. 183-189; and Walter Hugins, *Jacksonian Democracy and the Working Class, A Study of the New York Workingmen's Movement 1829-1837* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 13, 18-20, 132-134.

6 Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Il.: The Free Press, 1957), p. 169.

7 Mark Whitaker et al, "A Crisis of Shattered Dreams," *Newsweek*, May 6, 1991, p. 31.

8 Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (New York: Harper and Row Torchbooks, 1964), p. 156.

9 James Thomas Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (New York: New American Library, 1984), pp. 389- 390.

10 Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 462-466.

11 Generalizations such as these are inherently comparative, in this case with other countries, and are obviously not meant as absolute judgements. Obviously, Americans have distinguished and discriminated by group characteristics, as is evident in nativist anti- immigrant policies, quota restrictions against Jews and the like. But as compared to all other nations, they have been more individualistic.

12 Robert Shapiro and John T. Young, "Public Opinion and the Welfare State: The United States in Comparative Perspective," *Political Science Quarterly*, 104 (Spring 1989), pp. 69-70.

13 OECD, *Social Expenditure 1960-1990* (Paris: OECD, 1985), pp. 21, 24. Statistical reports for the mid- eighties reiterate this conclusion. In 1985, American educational expenditures amounted to 6.7 percent of the GDP. The average figure for 17 West European countries for the same year was 5.1 percent. UNESCO, *Statistical Yearbook* (Paris: 1989) pp. 73, 108-129. The differences are even more striking when percentages of age cohorts who have been exposed to post-secondary education are compared. As of 1987, 64.5 percent of the 20-24 year old age group in America fell in this category. No West European country was close. For example, the percentages for France are 30.9, for West Germany, 30.1, for Italy, 24.3, for The Netherlands, 31.3, for Spain, 30.0 and for the United Kingdom, 22.3. National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 1990*. (Washington: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1991), p. 380.

14 The pattern may be illustrated by developments in the prototypical social democratic polity, Sweden. In office from 1933 on, the Social Democrats greatly expanded the welfare state, but failed to recognize that their policies would have little influence on the achievement orientations of working class youth, particularly on the proportions attending university or entering the professions. The situation in Sweden did not change until *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the

American school desegregation decision, was enunciated by the Supreme Court in 1954. Previous to that, Sweden, like most other European countries, had a class-segregated high school educational system, with a privileged minority who attended to the gymnasia leading them to university level education, while the majority went to vocational schools which excluded the possibility of higher education. The Swedes, the British, and others began to integrate their high school systems in reaction to developments in the United States. That is, they adopted policies designed to facilitate individual mobility, by increasing the proportion of children from poorer families going to university. The ratio, however, is still much lower than in America.

15 Lawrence H. Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope Race, Ethnicity and the Civic Culture* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1990), pp. 165-168.

16 It should be noted that proposals for special preference or equality of results actually surfaced among blacks as early as 1871, soon after emancipation, when a black leader, Martin Delany, argued that the way to counter discrimination, was to establish quotas for blacks, mulattoes and other minorities. See Martin Delany, *Homes for the Freedman* (Charleston, SC: 1871); Dorothy Sterling, *The Making of an Afro-American: Martin Robinson Delany 1812-1885* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1971), pp. 288-290; Frederick Douglass, "Letter to Major Delany," in Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, vol. 4 (New York: International Publishers, 1955), pp. 280- 281. Debates over the need for "special efforts" and welfare programs for blacks occurred during the Reconstruction period. Many of the current arguments concerning "'class legislation' - singling out one group of citizens for special government favors," and their supposed invidious effect on black morale and encouragement of dependency were made then. See Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863 - 1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 67-68, 152-153, 237, 308-309.

17 Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 326-331; Tom Wicker, *One of Us: Richard Nixon and the American Dream* (New York: Random House, 1991), pp. 522-523.

18 Laurence H. Silberman, "The Road to Racial Quotas," *Wall Street Journal*, August 11, 1977, p. 14.

19 Graham, *The Civil Rights Era*, p. 331.

20 *Ibid*, pp. 339-340.

21 Robert Lerner, Althea K. Nagai and Stanley Rothman, "Elite Dissensus and Its Origins," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 18 (Summer 1990), p. 31.

22 Cruse compares the black situation to that of the Jews, and argues that although Jews faced great discrimination, all they needed was an end to discrimination and the application of meritocratic policies to themselves. Hence, he argues, this is what Jews demanded and ultimately obtained. Jewish organizations have made individual rights and meritocracy into a fetish and continue to emphasize the need to apply the American Creed to all immigrants and minorities. Blacks, however, Cruse argues, must demand and obtain group rights. Harold

Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1967), pp. 3-10 and passim.

23 There have, of course, been many examples of state support for group economic objectives, e.g., protective tariffs, guaranteed farm prices, minimum wages.

24 S. M. Lipset, *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 1963, expanded paperback edition, New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), p. 331.

25 Lawrence Fuchs has argued that the evaluation of proposals for preferential treatment in the occupational system should be linked to the "problem of standards," that is, the difference between jobs which require adequacy or competency and those which demand an ability and training to achieve at a high level. The latter require the best, not just competent, people. While it is possible to recognize higher levels of performance in almost all occupations, in many, if not most, competency is what employers require. Seniority rights, common in business, government and education, legislation outlawing compulsory retirement ages and tenure policies, are justified by assumptions about generalized competency, not superior achievement, as sufficient qualification for employment. Hence, the contention that blacks or other historically underprivileged groups should be given preference is particularly relevant to competency jobs, assuming that other conditions are equal or close to equal. But it is argued that positions for which high achievement levels are necessary, e.g., scholarship, medicine, sports, airline pilots, and managers should not be subject to quotas and special preference policies. A study determining the reasons for "the high rate of attrition of African-Americans training to be pilots and navigators in the armed services concluded that...those who graduate from college with less than a strong proficiency in verbal and quantitative skills would probably have difficulty keeping up with the rigorous curriculum and rapid pace of flight training 'whether they are blacks or whites.'" Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope*, pp. 451- 452. Fuchs concludes that affirmative action programs for Navy flyers or ballet dancers are "necessarily limited to special recruitment and training efforts." However, he argues that efforts to increase the number of minority workers among the less skilled such as "fire fighters, machinists, computer operators, and candidates for dental school" can include numerical goals, while permitting "race to be counted as one of many factors in attempting to meet them, along with insisting on basic qualifications." *Ibid*, p. 452. Whatever the merits of the distinction between competency and achievement occupations, those in the less privileged positions, whether fire fighters, police officers, dental technicians, or assembly line workers, do not accept inherently disparaging estimates of their worth and skills. Poll after poll finds that white workers see no reason for meritocratic standards and universalistic rules not applying to them. In fact, elite whites, whose positions and skill capital give them much more economic and status security than their lower status racial counterparts have, are more disposed to favor or at least more willing to accept special preferences for minorities.

26 For reviews of findings see James R. Kluegel and Eliot R. Smith, *Beliefs About Inequality: Americans' Views of What Is and What Ought To Be* (New York: Aldine Gruyter, 1986), pp. 200-203; John H. Bunzel, "Affirmative Re- actions," *Public Opinion*, 9 (February/March 1989), pp. 45-49; and Frederick R. Lynch, *Invisible Victims* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), pp.

17-20.

27 The Gallup Poll Monthly, December 1989, p. 18.

28 These breakdowns are from the 1987 sample. The 1990 results are similar.

29 Howard Schuman, Charlotte Steeh and Lawrence Bobo, *Racial Attitudes in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985). The General Social Survey of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) taken every two years since 1972 indicates steady improvement on attitudes toward racial equality in many areas through 1990.

30 Newsweek, May 6, 1991, pp. 30-31.

31 See S. M. Lipset and William Schneider, "The Bakke Case: How Would It Be Decided at the Bar of Public Opinion?" *Public Opinion*, 1 (March/April 1978), pp. 38- 44.

32 Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), p. 183.

33 For reports of studies and an excellent analysis see Thomas Byrne Edsall with Mary D. Edsall, "Race," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 267 (May 1991), pp. 53-56, 62-63.

34 Frederick R. Lynch, *Invisible Victims: White Males and the Crisis of Affirmative Action*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 3.

35 Thomas B. Edsall, "In Louisiana, Whites Often Feel Ignored," *Washington Post*, March 12, 1991, p. A5.

36 Thomas B. Edsall, "Rights Drive Said to Lose Underpinnings," *Washington Post*, March 9, 1991, p. A6.

37 *Ibid.*

38 William Raspberry, "Why Civil Rights Isn't Selling" *Washington Post*, March 13, 1991, p. A17.

39 Linda S. Lichter, "Who Speaks for Black America?" *Public Opinion*, 8 (August/September 1985), pp. 41-44, 58.

40 Diane Colasanto, "Public Wants Civil Rights Widened for Some Groups, Not for Others," *The Gallup Poll Monthly*, No. 291 (December 1989), p. 15.

41 William Julius Wilson, "Public Policy Research and the Truly Disadvantaged," in Jencks and Peterson, eds., *The Urban Underclass*, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1991), pp. 463-464.

- 42 Paul E. Peterson, "The Urban Underclass and the Poverty Paradox," in *The Urban Underclass*, p. 22.
- 43 Ronald B. Mincy, Isabel V. Sawhill and Douglas A. Wolf, "The Underclass: Definition and Measurement," *Science*, 248 (April 27 1990), p. 451.
- 44 Paul A. Jargowsky and Mary Jo Bane, "Ghetto Poverty in the United States, 1970-1980," in *The Urban Underclass*, p. 252.
- 45 Isabel V. Sawhill, "The Underclass: An Overview," *The Public Interest*, No. 96 (Summer 1989), pp. 6-11.
- 46 William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass, and Public Policy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Wilson, "Studying Inner-City Social Dislocations: The Challenge of Public Agenda Research," *American Sociological Review*, 56 (February 1991), pp. 8-10.
- 47 Richard P. Nathan, "Will the Underclass Always Be With Us?" *Society*, 24 (March/April 1987), p. 58.
- 48 *Ibid*, p. 58.
- 49 Ben J. Wattenberg, *The First Universal Nation: Leading Indicators and Ideas About the Surge of America in the 1990s* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 67.
- 50 Money, Income and Poverty Status in the United States 1989, Current Population Reports, Consumer Income, Series P-60, No. 168 (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1990), pp. 57-58. See also Christopher Jencks "Is the American Underclass Growing?" in Jencks and Peterson, eds., *The Urban Underclass*, pp. 36, 43.
- 51 James P. Smith and Finis R. Welch, *Closing the Gap: Forty Years of Economic Progress for Blacks* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1986), p. ix.
- 52 Lemann, *The Promised Land*, p. 283.
- 53 Ben J. Wattenberg, *The Birth Dearth: What Happens When People in Free Countries Don't Have Enough Babies*, (New York: Pharos Books, 1987), p. 77.
- 54 Gerald David Jaynes and Robin M. Williams, Jr., eds., *A Common Destiny: Blacks in American Society* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1989), p. 275.
- 55 *Ibid*, pp. 275-276.
- 56 William Julius Wilson, "Race, Class, and Public Policy," *The American Sociologist*, 16 (May 1981), pp. 126-127; Jaynes and Williams, *A Common Destiny*, pp. 279-286. For a breakdown by percent of one and two parent families, see "Family Demographics," *The*

American Enterprise, 2 (March/April 1991), p. 93.

57 David Ellwood and Jonathan Crane, "Family Change Among Black Americans: What Do We Know?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 4 (Fall 1990), p. 70.

58 Victor R. Fuchs, *The Feminization of Poverty?* (Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1986), pp. 10-11.

59 Jencks, "Is the American Underclass Growing?", pp. 86- 89.

60 Ibid, p. 87. See also James P. Scanlan, "The Perils of Provocative Statistics," *The Public Interest*, no. 102 (Winter 1991), pp. 5-8.

61 Soo Son, Suzanne W. Model, and Gene A. Fisher, "Polarization and Progress in the Black Community: Earnings and Status Gains for Young Black Males in the Era of Affirmative Action." *Sociological Forum*, 4 (September 1989), p. 323. See also Jencks, "Is the American Underclass Growing?," pp. 53-55.

62 Leonard, "The Impact of Affirmative Action," pp. 53, 60. Similar class differences have been reported with respect to the effects of affirmative action on women's opportunities. James P. Smith and Michael Wood, "Women in the Labor Market and the Family," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 3 (Winter 1989), p. 15.

63 Wilson, "Race, Class and Public Policy," pp. 127, 129.

64 Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, p. 115; *The Declining Significance of Race, Blacks, and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 18-19, 152-153; James Fishkin, *Justice, Equal Opportunity and the Family* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 92.

65 Soo, et al, "Polarization and Progress," p. 323. See also Fuchs, *The American Kaleidoscope*, pp. 442-444 and Jonathan S. Leonard, "The Impact of Affirmative Action Regulation and Equal Employment Law on Black Employment," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 4 (Fall 1990), pp. 50, 52, 61.

66 Henry Aaron, "Symposium on the Economic Status of African Americans," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 4 (Fall 1990), p. 5.

67 Margery Turner, Michael Fix and Raymond Struyk, *Opportunities Denied, Opportunities Diminished: Discrimination in Hiring* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1991).

68 See Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1964); S.M. Lipset, "American Exceptionalism Reaffirmed," in Byron Shafer, ed., *Is America Different?* (London: Oxford University Press, 1991).

69 The International Social Survey Program Coordinated by the National Opinion Research

Center (NORC). For published reports see Tom Smith "Social Inequality in Cross-National Perspective," in J.W. Becker, James A. Davis, Paul Ester and Peter P. Mohles, eds., *Attitudes to Inequality and The Role of Government* (The Hague: CIP Gegevens Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1990), p. 24; and "America's Unique Outlook," *The American Enterprise*, 1 (March/April 1990), p.116.

70 Ibid.

71 These data are reported in Smith, "Social Inequality," p. 24; and "America's Unique Outlook," p. 116. Most Americans still think that their children will do well. According to a 1991 ABC poll, close to three-quarters of parents believe their offspring will do better than they. Although as of 1991 Americans are increasingly concerned about the state of the economy, large majorities still continue to report that their personal economic situation is good. The objective rates of social mobility into professional or other privileged positions, as measured in very elaborate detail by sociologists, remain as high or higher than elsewhere. Changes in the occupational structure, inherent in a shift to a post-industrial economy, have led to increased levels of upward movement, comparing positions of respondents to those of their parents. And most Americans believe that hard work, rather than "lucky breaks or help from other people," is what enables people to move up. Surveys taken by the NORC from 1983 through 1990 found that around two-thirds consistently agreed that "people get ahead by hard work." Much larger percentages said "ambition" is essential or very important (88) "for getting ahead in life" than felt the same way about "coming from a wealthy family" (20), or having well educated parents (39).

72 For a discussion of the various multi-ethnic countries which give preferences to deprived groups, sometimes to underprivileged majorities, see Thomas Sowell, "'Affirmative Action': A Worldwide Disaster," *Commentary*, 88 (December 1989), pp. 21-41.

73 See Lipset, *Continental Divide*, p. 181.

74 For reference to the literature and the analyses, see S.M. Lipset, "Why No Socialism in the United States?" in Seweryn Bialer and Sophia Sluzar, eds., *Sources of Contemporary Radicalism*, Vol. 1 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 50-58.

75 Walter Dean Burnham, "The United States: The Politics of Heterogeneity," in Richard Rose, ed., *Electoral Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1974), p. 718.

76 For documentation, see Lipset, "The Death of the Third Way," *The National Interest*, Summer 1990, pp. 25-38.

77 Douglass, "Letter to Major Delany," in Foner, ed., *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, vol. 4, pp. 280-281.

78 Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 67-68.

79 Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 13.

80 Ibid, pp. 115-118.

81 See Lipset, "The Death of the Third Way."