

action for more than two decades, has changed his mind. The author of *Affirmative Discrimination* (1975) now reluctantly favors affirmative action for blacks (though not for other minorities or for women). “We cannot be quite so cavalier about the impact on public opinion—black and white—of a radical reduction in the number of black students at the Harvards, the Berkeleys, and the Amhersts,” he writes in the *New Republic* (Apr. 6, 1998). “These institutions have become, for better or worse, the gateways to prominence, privilege, wealth, and power in American society.” To abolish affirmative action, he now believes, “would undermine the legitimacy of American democracy.”

Nonsense, retorts Jim Sleeper, author of *Liberal Racism* (1997), writing in the on-line magazine *Salon* (www.salonmagazine.com). “The public can and should be cavalier about the vision of Harvard as an arbiter of American destiny.” Outside the clubby universe of some Ivy Leaguers, he says, “a more astringent meritocracy lets countless individuals rise.”

“Elite” liberals who favor racial preferences, Sleeper charges, are “deeply fatalistic . . . about blacks’ capacities and prospects—and dismayingly fainthearted about undertaking any social and moral initiatives that might really reduce blacks’ measured deficiencies.” The best way to refute the notions—privately held, Sleeper asserts, by “more and more elite liberals”—that these deficiencies are genetic in origin, or so culturally embedded as to be virtually impossible to overcome, is “to couple stricter, race-transcendent standards . . . with clearer cultural messages (about families and work).”

Much has been made, Sleeper notes, of the fact that after Proposition 209, black and Hispanic admissions plummeted at the highly competitive University of California campuses in Berkeley (by 57 and 40 percent, respectively) and Los Angeles (by 43 and 33 percent). But such minority admissions “are down only mar-

ginally at the University of California’s eight campuses overall.” In other words, many minority candidates have still qualified “for campuses, like Riverside or Irvine, where they’re far more likely to succeed.”

That’s not the way matters appear to Terry Jones, a sociologist at California State University, Hayward. “For some people of color,” he writes in *Academe* (July–Aug. 1998), “Proposition 209 looks suspiciously like legislative vigilantism or an attempt to impose ethnic cleansing in higher education. . . . Is it in society’s interest to have a state-supported institution that excludes people of color based on grades and aptitude tests? . . . [U]sing such a limited definition of merit can only perpetuate white privilege.”

Americans do not want to do away with affirmative action entirely, writes Christopher H. Foreman, Jr., a Senior Fellow in the Brookings Institution’s Governmental Studies Program and guest editor of the special issue of *Brookings Review*. “Aggressive outreach and job training” are clearly acceptable, for example. But “race-normed tests and further breaks for the already conspicuously advantaged” are not.

Foreman worries that affirmative action, “a boon to middle-class blacks like me,” diverts attention from the needs of low-income blacks. James Traub, a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, agrees. “Affirmative action is, at bottom, a dodge,” he writes in a companion piece to Glazer’s in the *New Republic*. “It allows us to put off the far harder work: ending the isolation of young black people and closing the academic gap that separates black students—even middle-class black students—from whites. When we commit ourselves to that, we can do without affirmative action, but not before.” The Thernstroms may not share Traub’s timetable, but like other affirmative action critics, they agree that closing the black gap in cognitive skills is paramount. How to accomplish that may now become the next subject of debate.

Voting for the New South

“Black Migration to the South Reaches Record Highs in 1990s” by William H. Frey, in *Population Today* (Feb. 1998), Population Reference Bureau, 1875 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Ste. 520, Washington, D.C. 20009–5728.

Voting with their feet (in the famous phrase), African Americans from all parts of the country have now made it unanimous: the once benighted South is no

longer a region to be shunned.

Between 1990 and 1995, the South had a net influx of 368,800 blacks, and, for the first time in any comparable period, saw net gains of

black migrants from the West, as well as from the Northeast and Midwest, reports Frey, a demographer with the University of Michigan's Population Studies Center.

The historic black exodus from the South between 1910 and the late 1960s began to be reversed in the 1970s, Frey notes, as the result of "industrial downsizing in the North and an improving racial and economic climate in the South." Between 1975 and 1980, and between 1985 and 1990, the South gained black migrants, largely from the Northeast and Midwest, while still losing them to the West. Then, between 1990 and 1995, net black migration from the Northeast and the Midwest rose, and began from the West. California's dismal economy in the early 1990s and Texas's economic resurgence explain some of the West-to-South movement.

Most of the recent black migrants to the South are of working age; only seven percent are retirees. About 20 percent of the migrants are college graduates.

"The South's booming metropolitan areas—Atlanta, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Miami—are responsible for some, but not all, of the South's black population gains," Frey says. Of the 10 metropolitan areas in the country that gained the most black residents between 1990 and 1996, seven were in the South, and Atlanta was the national leader, with an increase of 159,830 black residents. Smaller metropolitan areas and rural areas in the South also showed gains.

More than half (53 percent) of the nation's African Americans now live in the South, Frey notes, and the Census Bureau expects high rates of black migration there to continue.

The Breakup Conundrum

"Transitions in Family Structure and Adolescent Well-Being" by Ed Spruijt and Martijn de Goede, in *Adolescence* (Winter 1997), Libra Publishers, Inc., 3089C Clairemont Dr., Ste. 383, San Diego, Calif. 92117.

Should parents who are always at each other's throats stay together for the sake of the children? The traditional answer is yes; the modern one is no. A study of 2,517 Dutch youths (ages 15–24) suggests there may be something to the older view.

The overwhelming majority (2,177) of the youths studied were in families with both natural parents present, and 139 of them were in homes with serious marital discord. The parents of the remaining 340 youths had divorced (10 years before the 1991 interviews, on average), with 91 of the offspring subsequently acquiring a stepparent.

Spruijt and de Goede, social scientists at Utrecht University, found that the youths in single-parent households were worst off—in terms of physical and psychological health, success in relationships with the opposite sex, and ability

to hold down a job. The youngsters in harmonious families with both natural parents present were best off. No surprises there. Nor, perhaps, in the finding that the youths whose parents were perpetually at odds "are somewhat comparable to single-parent youngsters in their psychological well-being." (On that score, the youths in stepfamilies did better.)

But the authors also found that when it came to relationships and holding down a job, the youths from troubled intact families, as well as the youths in stepfamilies, did better than their counterparts in single-parent homes. Indeed, they did almost as well as those in stable intact families. The researchers' conclusion: parental conflict can hurt children, but "the effects clearly become stronger when the parents are in fact divorced."

Stadium Scam

"Rooting the Home Team" by David Morris and Daniel Kraker, in *The American Prospect* (Sept.–Oct. 1998), P.O. Box 383080, Cambridge, Mass. 02238; "Sports Stadium Boondoggle" by Mark F. Bernstein, in *The Public Interest* (Summer 1998), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Folks in Denver were jubilant last January when the Broncos won the Super Bowl. Only months later, however, they were handed a blunt message from the team's owners: Cough

up \$250 million for a new stadium—or else. The or else was that the Broncos might move to another city.

This sort of extortion by professional sports