PS1 for 12/8/88#WHO ARE THE ENEMIES OF THE BLACKS?

Conventional wisdom is that the welfare state is the savior of the blacks, who are presumed to need the goodies of government generosity in order to alleviate their status of poverty and years of discrimination. Now comes one of the most prominent blacks in America to say otherwise.

James Meredith achieved national fame in the 1960s as the first black to enter and graduate from the University of Mississippi. In 1966, he escaped an assassin's shotgun blast while on a ""Walk Against Fear.'' Now he is a businessman, lawyer and author.

This fall in a speech in Indianapolis, Meredith lashed out against the liberals, saying, ""The welfare state mentality that has mushroomed for the last 40 years under liberal policies in this nation has turned the black community into second-class citizenry bordering on slavery.''

Meredith continued, ""We don't need handouts. We are not a disadvantaged minority in need of government preferences and protection; we need to assert our rights as first-class citizens, accept our duties, responsibilities and obligations, and become independent of government control.''

He exhorted blacks to ""take back control of ourselves and our communities.'' ""Dependency,'' he said, ""is just another form of slavery.'' He identified the ""white liberals'' as ""the greatest enemy facing the black race in 1988.''

Meredith cited the welfare programs, the low-cost housing programs, the affirmative action programs, busing of school children and other ""supposedly'' liberal reforms as examples of taking away self-control of the black community and putting it in the hands of government.

Meredith charged that ""this plan for black progress'' was never

intended to work. ""It was designed to take control of the black community from the hands of blacks and put it into the hands of white liberals -- the government -- to make us dependent on them as a source of revenue instead of ourselves as the source of revenue.''

The solution is not simple, he said. ""You can overcome the financial setbacks, the political setbacks; but it is very difficult to mend what has happened to the morals.''

""We need to return to the family as a source of strength, hard work instead of handouts, and a pride in our schools and communities. We must assert ourselves as responsible first-class citizens and take back control.''

The Reverend Henry Mitchell, a black who has been running a mission in Chicago for several decades, was so excited about Meredith's blunt speech that he distributed thousands of copies. Mitchell has been saying the same things for the last 20 years.

In commenting on Meredith's speech, Reverend Mitchell added some words of his own. He said that the ""so-called liberals are bleeding the taxpayers to death. They care nothing about the poor. In the city of Chicago, there are 144,000 blacks living in government housing. These people have been misused and abused by the so-called liberals who use them for their own political gain.''

Mitchell continued, ""For many years, I have seen hundreds of thousands of blacks persuaded by the so-called liberals to accept things such as a chicken, perfume, stockings, or two dollars in exchange for their vote.''

Mitchell urged the black middle class to move back in the black community and provide constructive role models so that black children won't look up to dope peddlers and pushers.

Mitchell asked why it was that the (BF)Indianapolis Star(end BF) was the only newspaper that reported Meredith's speech. ""Where were

Barbara Walters, Ted Koppel and Sam Donaldson?'' he asked. ""It is a shame that such an inspirational speech was not broadcast all over the world.''

Another articulate black now saying similar things is the columnist Courtland Milloy. He recently wrote, ""Black people should be about shaking off their plantation and welfare mentalities. Black people should be about building confidence, self-esteem and savings accounts. This requires an attitude change, and frankly it is the Republican Party that embodies it.''

If the blacks would look behind the liberals' patronizing rhetoric, the blacks would find that they have prospered more under Reaganomics than ever before. Under Reagan, white employment has risen 12.6 percent, but black employment has risen 25.8 percent.

Dependency on liberal spending programs is a deadend road for blacks. Jobs in a free market economy and family togetherness -- the conservative values -- are the keys to self-esteem and a rising share in the American dream.